Aspects of medieval landscape change in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire: evidence from the feet of fines.

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Doctor of Philosophy
of the University of Wales.

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Summary

This dissertation is an examination of the validity and potential of a series of documents known as feet of fines. It represents the analysis of data gathered from over 5000 original, medieval fines at the Public Record Office in Kew. Computer technology, notably Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and databases, has been utilized in the analysis. This has led to the production of a series of tables, graphs and maps for the chosen study area: the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. The research has enabled a comparative study of land use and settlement patterns and has revealed that fines are an excellent source for the study of certain themes, such as the period of the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century and the plotting of the course of the advance of pasture in the later medieval period.

The origins of feet of fines are examined along with their development, their structure and content. Their value as a source for the historian and the historical-geographer has been assessed and the data has been used for the study of the three counties in question. A regional study of each county has been undertaken along with a general examination of land use and settlement patterns. This is followed by an assessment of how feet of fines can be used to enhance this pattern for the period 1196-1509. All three county studies include a series of tables and graphs produced from the database of fines and maps produced from linking these databases to a GIS digital mapping system.

The conclusion highlights the differences in land use and settlement patterns in the three counties and includes comparisons between the three studies.

Contents.

List of maps

List of graphs

List of tables

List of figures

Acknowledgements

Chapter **Pages**

1. Introduction. 1-3.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the research.

1.2 The approach adopted.

2. Feet of fines: their origins, development and uses for the historical-geographer. 4-37.

2.1 The origins of feet of fines.

2.2 The development of feet of fines.

2.3 The structure and content of feet of fines.

2.4 Feet of fines as a source for the historian and the historical-geographer.

2.5 The categories of society who used fines as a way of conveyance.

2.6 Feet of fines and the historical-geographer: Past uses.

2.7 Feet of fines and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth-century.

2.8 Conclusion.

3. **Historical geography and computer technology: an overview.** 38-52.

3.1 Background.

3.2 Digital technology and feet of fines.

3.3 Conclusion.

4. **Herefordshire in the feet of fines.** 53-140.

4.1 Regional survey.

4.2 Agriculture and settlement.

4.3 Problems associated with agriculture and settlement in Herefordshire and possible uses of feet of fines.

4.4 Herefordshire feet of fines: Statistics and analysis.

4.5 Herefordshire and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century.

4.6 Distribution of land types and settlement in medieval Herefordshire: mapping the evidence.

4.7 People and property.

4.8 Conclusion.

5. **Shropshire in the feet of fines.** 137-226.

5.1 Regional survey.

5.2 Agriculture and settlement.

5.3 Problems associated with agriculture and settlement in Shropshire and possible uses of feet of fines.

5.4 Shropshire feet of fines: Statistics and analysis.

5.5 Shropshire feet of fines and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century.

5.6 Distribution of land types and settlement in Shropshire, mapping the evidence.

5.7 People and property.

5.8 Conclusion.

6. Gloucestershire in the feet of fines. 227-311.

6.1 Regional survey.

6.2 Settlement in Gloucestershire.

6.3 Agriculture.

6.4 Gloucestershire in the feet of fines: Statistics and analysis.

6.5 Gloucestershire feet of fines and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century.

6.6 Distribution of land types and settlement in Gloucestershire, mapping the evidence.

6.7 People and property.

6.8 Conclusion.

7. Conclusion. 312-321.

7.1 The validity of fines.

7.2 Computer technology.

7.3 The three counties.

7.4 Summary.

Bibliography 322-329.

List of maps

Chapter 2: Feet of Fines: their Origins, Development and uses for the Historical-Geographer.

B1:	Evidence of vills with records of uncultivated lands in 1341 (after Baker).	after p. 36

Chapter 4: Herefordshire in the feet of fines:

H1:	Herefordshire relief (after Atkin).	after p. 53
H2:	Herefordshire regions (after Atkin).	after p. 54
H3:	Herefordshire regions (after Dodd).	after p. 62
H4:	Herefordshire soils (after Duncumb).	after p. 71
H5:	Herefordshire parishes (after the Institute of Heraldic and genealogical studies).	after p. 97
H6:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.	after p. 98
H7:	Distribution of acreages of all types of land recorded In the feet of fines, 1199-1507.	after p. 98
H8:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.	after p. 99
H9:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.	after p. 100
H10:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.	after p. 100
H11:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of	after p. 101

land recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.

H12: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 102

H13: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 102

H14: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250. after p. 103

H15: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250. after p. 104

H16: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 106

H17: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 106

H18: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 107

H19: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 109

H20: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 111

H21: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 111

H22: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 112

H23: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 113

H24: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 114

H25: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 114

H26: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250. after p. 115

H27: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250. after p. 115
H28: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 116
H29: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 116
H30 Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 117
H31: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 117
H32: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 118
H33: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 118
H34: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 119
H35: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 119
H36: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 121
H37: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 122
H38: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 123
H39: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 123
H40: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 124
H41: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 125
H42: Regional percentages of wood recorded in after p. 126

the feet of fines, 1353-1404.
H43: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 126
H44: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 127
H45: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 127
H46: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 128
H47: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507. after p. 129
H48: Total messuages recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507. after p. 130
H49: Total shops recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507. after p. 134
H50: Total tofts recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507. after p. 135
H51: Total mills recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507. after p. 136
H52: Plaintiffs of Welsh origin, 1199-1507. after p. 138
H53: Deforciants of Welsh origin, 1199-1507. after p. 138

Chapter 5: Shropshire in the feet of fines:

S1: Shropshire regions (after Rowley). after p. 142
S2: Shropshire regions (after Saunders). after p. 156
S3: Shropshire relief: (after Saunders). after p. 156
S4: Shropshire parishes (after the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies). after p. 186
S5: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508. after p. 187
S6: Distribution of acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508. after p. 188
S7: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of after p. 189

land recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.

S8: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300. after p. 189

S9: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352. after p. 190

S10: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 191

S11: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456. after p. 191

S12: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508. after p. 192

S13: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248. after p. 193

S14: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248. after p. 194

S15: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300. after p. 195

S16: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300. after p. 195

S17: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352. after p. 196

S18: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352. after p. 196

S19: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 197

S20: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 198

S21: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456. after p. 200

S22: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456. after p. 200

S23:	Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.	after p. 201
S24:	Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.	after p. 203
S25:	Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.	after p. 205
S26:	Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.	after p. 205
S27:	Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.	after p. 206
S28:	Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.	after p. 206
S29:	Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.	after p. 207
S30:	Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.	after p. 207
S31:	Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.	after p. 208
S32:	Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.	after p. 208
S33:	Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.	after p. 209
S34:	Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.	after p. 209
S35:	Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.	after p. 211
S36:	Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.	after p. 211
S37:	Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.	after p. 212

S38: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300. after p. 212
S39: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352. after p. 213
S40: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352. after p. 213
S41: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 214
S42: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 214
S43: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456. after p. 215
S44: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456. after p. 215
S45: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508. after p. 216
S46: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508. after p. 216
S47: Total messuages recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508. after p. 217
S48: Total shops recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508. after p. 219
S49: Total tofts recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508. after p. 220
S50: Total mills recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508. after p. 221
S51: Plaintiffs of Welsh origin, 1196-1508. after p. 223
S52: Deforciants of Welsh origin, 1196-1508. after p. 223

Chapter 6: Gloucestershire in the feet of fines:

G1: Gloucestershire regions (after Darby). after p. 228
G2: Gloucestershire relief (after Darby). after p. 229
G3: Gloucestershire geology (after Darby). after p. 230

G4:	Gloucestershire parishes (after the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical studies).	after p. 262
G5:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.	after p. 263
G6:	Distribution of acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.	after p. 263
G7:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.	after p. 264
G8:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.	after p. 265
G9:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.	after p. 265
G10:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.	after p. 266
G11:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.	after p. 266
G12:	Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.	after p. 267
G13:	Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.	after p. 268
G14:	Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.	after p. 268
G15:	Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.	after p. 269
G16:	Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.	after p. 269
G17:	Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.	after p. 270
G18:	Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.	after p. 270
G19:	Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet	after p. 271

of fines, 1353-1404.

G20: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 271

G21: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 272

G22: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 272

G23: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508. after p. 273

G24: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508. after p. 273

G25: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250. after p. 275

G26: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250. after p. 276

G27: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 278

G28: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 279

G29: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 280

G30: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 281

G31: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 282

G32: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 283

G33: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 284

G34: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 285

G35: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508. after p. 286
G36: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508. after p. 287
G37: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 290
G38: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302. after p. 291
G39: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 293
G40: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352. after p. 293
G41: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 294
G42: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404. after p. 295
G43: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 296
G44: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455. after p. 296
G45: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508. after p. 297
G46: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508. after p. 297
G47: Total messuages recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508. after p. 299
G48: Total shops recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508. after p. 307
G49: Total tofts recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508. after p. 308
G50: Total mills recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508. after p. 308

List of graphs.

Chapter 4: Herefordshire in the feet of fines:

H1:	Arable acreage in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.	p. 88
H2:	Meadow acreage in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.	p. 89
H3:	Pasture acreage in the feet of fines, 1226-1507.	p. 90
H4:	Wood acreage in the feet of fines, 1248-1507.	p. 91
H5:	Numbers of fines issued per year.	p. 93

Chapter 5: Shropshire in the feet of fines:

S1:	Arable acres in the feet of fines, 1196-1508.	p. 175
S2:	Meadow acres in the feet of fines, 1196 - 1508.	p. 176
S3:	Pasture acres in the feet of fines, 1196 - 1508.	p. 177
S4:	Pasture acres in the feet of fines, 1236-1368.	p. 179
S5:	Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1196 - 1508.	p. 180
S6:	Wood acres inthe feet of fines, 1277-1367.	p. 181
S7:	Total numbers of fines issued per year.	p. 138

Chapter 6:Gloucestershire in the feet of fines:

G1:	Arable acres in the feet of fines 1199-1508.	p. 251
G2:	Meadow acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.	p. 252
G3:	Pasture acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.	p. 253
G4:	Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.	p. 254
G5:	Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1279-1375.	p. 256
G6:	Total number of fines issued per year.	p. 262
G7:	Messuages in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.	p. 304
G8:	Messuages in Gloucester.	p. 305
G9:	Messuages in Bristol.	p. 306

List of tables.

Chapter 4: Herefordshire in the feet of fines:

H1:	Land use in the mid-nineteenth century	p. 72
H2:	Herefordshire feet of fines, 1199-1507. Numbers and average sizes of transaction involving each type of land.	p. 80
H3:	Unidentified acreage.	p. 81
H4:	Percentage of all land types identified.	p. 81
H5:	Number of land types per fine.	p. 82
H6:	Average number of parishes per fine.	p. 83
H7:	Distribution of sizes of transaction of selected types (number of fines).	p. 84
H8:	Transaction averages of fines that mention land of all types.	p. 85
H9:	Average area and number of fines that mention land.	p. 86
H10:	Average area and number of fines that mention land (by century).	p. 87
H11:	Highest concentration of messuages, 1199-1507.	p. 131

Chapter 5: Shropshire in the feet of fines:

S1:	Percentage of identified land in the Shropshire fines.	p. 170
S2:	Shropshire feet of fines, 1196-1508. Numbers and average sizes of transactions involving each land type.	p. 171
S3:	Transactions over time.	p. 173
S4:	Major land types over time.	p. 174
S5:	Highest concentration of messuages, 1196-1508.	p. 218
S6:	Shops.	p. 220

Chapter 6: Gloucestershire in the feet of fines:

G1:	Gloucestershire feet of fines, 1199-1508. Numbers and average sizes of transactions involving major land types.	p. 248
G2:	Transactions over time.	p. 250
G3:	Major land types over time.	p. 250
G4:	Highest concentrations of messuages, 1199-1508.	p. 299
G5:	Shops.	p. 307
G6:	Tofts.	p. 308

List of figures.

Chapter 2: Feet of fines, their origins, development and uses for the historical-geographer:

1: The foot of a Herefordshire fine, PRO: CP25/1/80/4/43. after p. 4

2: A complete Lincolnshire tripartite final concord (after Lincoln Record Society). after p. 5

Chapter 1

Introduction.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the research.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the series of documents known as feet of fines as an historico-geographical source. This study will be conducted with particular reference to changing patterns of land-use in the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire throughout the period 1196 to 1509.

At the outset of the research the validity of the feet of fines as a source will be demonstrated. The fines will be placed in their legal context. Documents relating to medieval land law can be categorized as those of the king, those of the Church and those of the magnates; the feet of fines extend the perspective into other, more lowly, levels of society. To establish a picture of the category of society who used feet of fines it will be necessary to compare the personal names recorded in fines with those in other documents such as lay subsidy rolls.

The feet of fines have a uniform layout which enables the researcher to gather data from them quickly and in a standardized form. This data can be incorporated into databases and in conjunction with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) software can be used to produce computer-generated maps, highlighting the findings.

The data derived from the feet of fines for Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire were studied and maps used to test specific hypotheses relating to medieval land-use and settlement in the chosen counties. The very long time span and the

number of fines available, in excess of 5000, enabled the researcher to gain a very good perspective on landholding.

1.2 The approach adopted.

Three distinct types of research were brought together in this study: the collection of data, the identification of place-names and the utilization of GIS technology to make the maps.

Data was collected from the original documents at the Public Record Office in Kew. Of the counties chosen only a very small sample of the original fines has been published. This means that the collection of data itself represents a major part of the research and brought to light a number of original findings. From the information gathered at the Public Record Office three data sets - one for each of the chosen counties - were created containing the relevant information for the period 1196-1509. The most important information to be collected from the documents was place-names, land-types and acreage. This data was used to produce maps highlighting the type of land and property most frequently conveyed in a particular region at a particular time.

The identification of the place-names contained in feet of fines with their modern equivalent was of paramount importance to the research. The place-name locates the region within the county that the particular parcel of land was in. When such information is gathered for the whole county over a long time span then it is possible to map regional trends and changes. The identification of place-names involves the consultation of sources including the English Place-Name Society volumes, the Philimore translations of the

Domesday survey and the Victoria County Histories. Place-names can change considerably over time and there is also the problem of multiple instances of certain names within a single county. This meant that it was also important to collect all the personal-names recorded in the fines to help with identification.

The data collected from the feet of fines was converted into digital information in the form of databases which were linked to the Arc/Info GIS package. The data was then be used to produce high-quality digital maps highlighting the land-use changes in the counties being studied.

This study will initially review some past uses that have been made of feet of fines and will demonstrate their validity for a study of this nature. A brief overview of the application of GIS software to historical datasets will follow. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will examine the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. The whole study will end with a conclusion which will attempt to draw out regional trends.

Chapter 2

Feet of Fines: their Origins, Development and uses for the Historical-Geographer.

This chapter discusses the origins of the feet of fines. It explains how they developed throughout the medieval period and how they became a very popular method of conveyance. It then goes on to show how the historian and historical-geographer can use the data held in feet of fines. Their value will be explored through a series of examples illustrating how scholars have used them in the past. Fig. 1 is an example of a fairly typical foot of a fine relating to a virgate of land in Herefordshire. It was issued in Worcester in the fifth year of the reign of Henry III and involved the following people: Thomas, son of Simon, his wife Juliana and her sister Sibilla who obtained the land from Hugh, son of William.[1]

2.1 The origins of feet of fines.

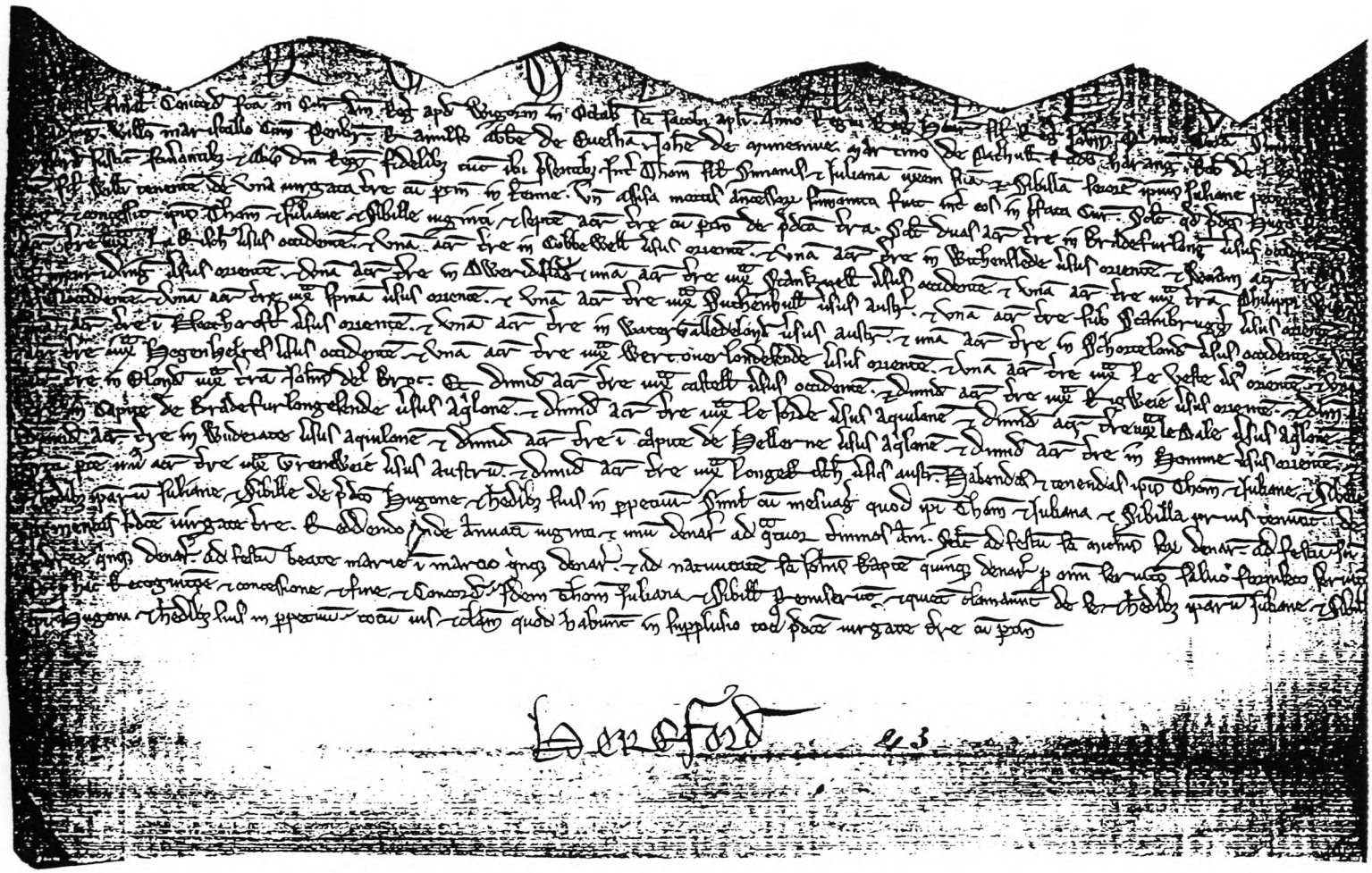
The following sections (2.1, 2.2 and 2.3) are primarily based on an anonymous manuscript produced by the Public Record Office. It examines the legal and historical background to the fines and describes how they have been catalogued and stored over the years.[2]

Prior to 1195 any disagreement between two individuals could be heard in the king's court and the dispute could be resolved by final concord. The exception was in cases involving injury or tort. The normal procedure was to record the agreement in a bi-partite

[1] PRO: CP25/1/80/4/43.

[2] Anon, 'Court of Common Pleas, General Eyres and Court of the King's Bench: Feet of Fines Files Richard I - Henry VII, CP25/1, nd, Unpublished ms. Public Record Office, London, (Henceforth Anon PRO ms.).

Figure 1: The foot of a Herefordshire fine, PRO: CP25/1/80/4/43.



form known as a chirograph. The two copies of the agreement were usually separated with an indentured cut through a word or phase (normally CYROGRAPHUM) written across the centre of the form in large capital letters. The authenticity of the document could be checked by bringing together the two halves. There are agreements of this type dating back to 1163 and by about 1189 the procedure had become "well established."[3] A treatise on the activities of the royal courts written in the late twelfth century acknowledges:

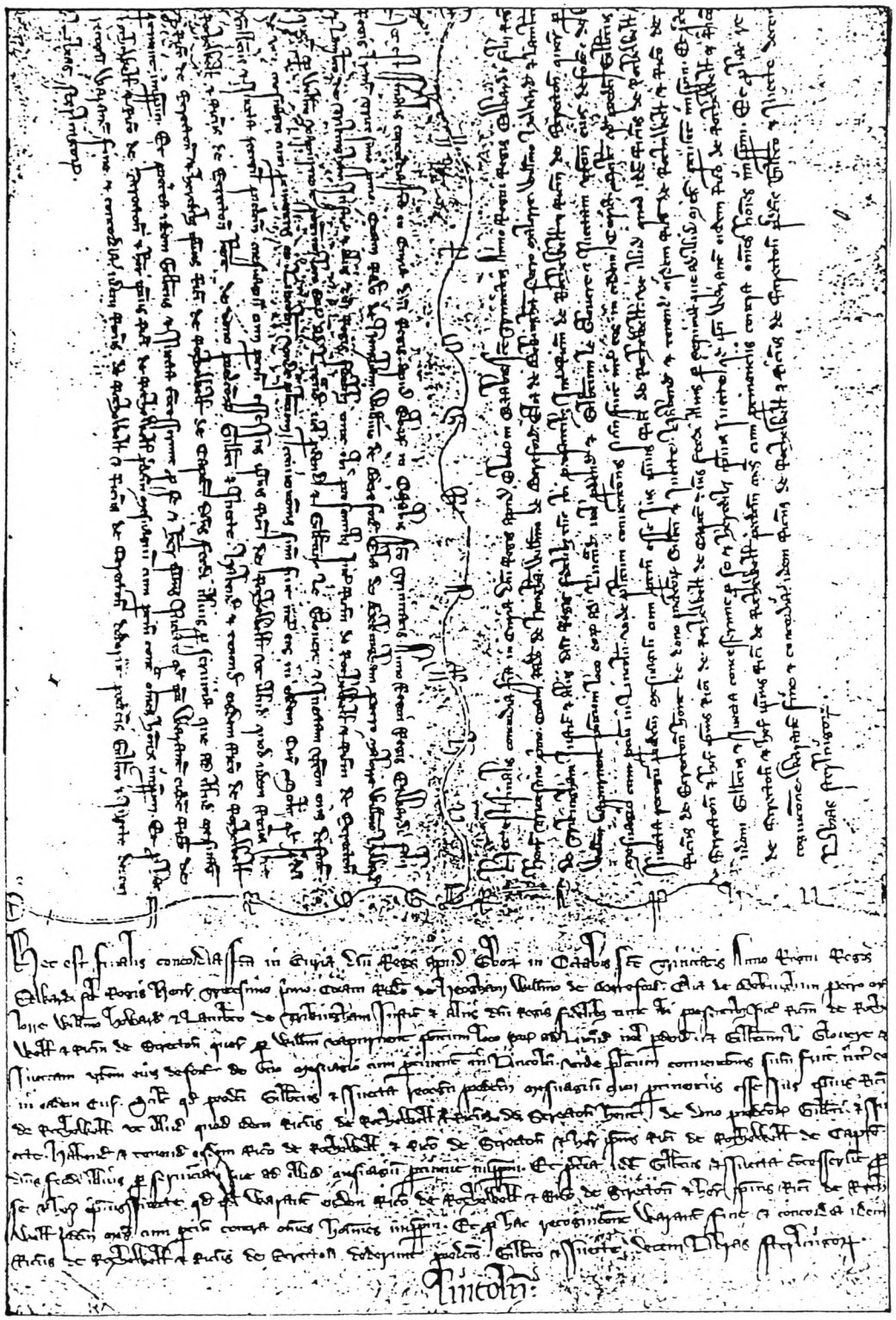
> "It often happens that cases begun in the lord king's court are ended by amicable composition and final concord subject to the consent and license of the lord king or his justices, whether the plea concerns land or something else. Such a concord is generally, by common consent of the parties, written down in a chirograph, and the written terms read over to the lord king's justices sitting on the bench, in whose presence there is delivered to each his own part of the chirograph, which is identical with the other part."[4]

A very significant development occurred *c.* 1195 when a third copy of the agreement began to be produced and retained by the court. The three copies were written out on a piece of parchment and separated with an indentured cut in the same manner as for bi-partite agreements. The 'foot' was the bottom copy and was kept by the court as a record of the transaction. This method helped combat forgery, as the three parts would only fit together again if they were genuine. A rare example of a final concord including all three copies of the agreement and relating to properties in Lincolnshire is displayed in fig. 2. Prior to this development the court had kept details of concords by recording the

[3] Anon PRO ms., p. 1.

[4] G. D. G. Hall (ed.) *The treatise on the laws and customs of England commonly called Glanvill,* (London, 1965), p. 94.

Figure 2: A complete Lincolnshire tripartite final concord (after Lincoln Record Society.)



agreement on the plea rolls. This method was still sometimes used in the thirteenth century but was "completely superseded by chirographs thereafter."[5]

The idea to begin producing tri-partite final concords seems to have come from Hubert Walter, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He held office as Richard I's chief justiciar (between 1193 and 1198) and was King John's chancellor (1199-1205). During this period there was an enormous increase in the production of documents that were intended to be kept as permanent records. This diligence has helped ensure their survival to the present day. The oldest extant series of plea rolls, chancery enrolments of outgoing letters and feet of fines all date from this era. Walter may not have been the only person responsible for all the bureaucratic advances of this period but he certainly was the driving force behind the establishment of tri-partite final concords.[6] The first example of this type of fine (dated 15 July 1195) has the following endorsement:

> "This is the first chirograph that was made in the king's court in the form of three chirographs, according to the command of his lordship of Canterbury [Hubert Walter] and other barons of the king, to the end that by this form a record can be made to be passed to the treasurer to put in the treasury."[7]

It has been noted that Walter's brother, Theobald, was the plaintiff in this agreement, which has been taken as further evidence for Walter's involvement in the process.[8] Because it is explicitly stated that the third copy was to be placed in the Treasury it is clear that a decision had been made to keep a permanent record of such agreements. The practice of keeping a third copy of an agreement did have its origins in Anglo-Saxon

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[5] Anon PRO ms., p. 1.

[6] M. T. Clanchy, *From memory to written record,* (Oxford, 1993), p. 68.

[7] C. R. Cheney, *Hubert Walter,* (London, 1967), p. 96.

[8] Anon PRO ms., p. 1.

times, but Walter's role in the process was of great importance because, as Clanchy has stated:

> "For the first time, a form of record had been deliberately inaugurated as a continuing series for archival purposes . . . What had in the past been exceptional practice now became the rule."[9]

Clanchy believes that the development of the foot of the fine had great implications for private individuals. From this time on there was a system in place that offered them the opportunity to have a permanent record of their transactions kept in the royal treasury. Clanchy suggests that the importance of this development is indicated by the swiftness in which the process became used as a method of conveyance by private landowners.[10]

2.2 The development of feet of fines.

As has been suggested above, final concords quickly became a very common method of establishing a record of an agreement in the royal courts of common law: the Bench (later the Court of Common Pleas) at Westminster, the General Eyre, (which toured the English counties) and the Court Coram Rege (later the Court of the King's Bench). During the course of the thirteenth century collusive actions came to be brought for the specific purpose of levying a final concord and therefore gaining a record of the agreement in the king's court. Clerks, familiar with the procedure of the king's courts, administered the process.[11] The procedure became well established by the later thirteenth century, partially due to the increasing professionalism of the legal system and its

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[9] Clanchy, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[11] Anon PRO ms., p. 2.

administrators. Attorneys probably advised their clients as to the convenience of using this method of conveyance and this would account for the regular use of "named sergeants" to obtain final concords on behalf of their clients by the reign of Edward I.[12]

During the thirteenth century the Bench, General Eyres, the Court Coram Rege and occasionally the Assize sessions produced fines. Most were levied in Eyres until the latter part of the century. It has been suggested that this was due to convenience because of the presence of the justices locally.[13] The majority of the remaining fines issued in this period were made in the Bench. A chirographer wrote the final concords and before the end of King John's reign the Bench had its own chirographer. Subsequently the chirographer was regularly appointed by letters patent. It seems that he and his assistants went on circuit with the justices when the Bench was not sitting so as to write the Eyre fines.[14]

It has been estimated that between the period of the Hilary term of 1218 and the Trinity term of 1234, over 6332 fines were made in Eyres with a few files known to have been lost. A total of 2385 fines were made in the Bench during the same period, with only one file known to have been damaged. In Henry III's reign less than 200 final concords were levied in the Court Coram Rege or in Assize sessions held before the king and after this period there were no others levied there.[15] There was never a chirographer associated with the Court Coram Rege. Only in the thirteenth century were feet of fines made before

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

justices of assize and these documents are extremely rare.[16] Eyres virtually ceased in 1294 and, with the exception of those fines made in the few Eyres held in the early fourteenth century, all succeeding final concords were made in the Bench. There was a large group of professional attorneys in Westminster by this time which ensured that litigation there was much more convenient for landholders living in the Shires because they did not have to appear in court in person.[17]

In the thirteenth century final concords were used in cases concerning a variety of writs relating to land including writs of right and *mort d'ancestor* and the most popular, the writ of warranty of charter. The writ of covenant, which supposed that the defendant had failed to keep an agreement, gradually became the most popular during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II. Such writs completely superseded the others during the early years of Edward III and remained the form upon which fines were normally levied until their termination in 1833.[18]

2.3 The structure and content of feet of fines.

Feet of fines, from the outset, were very standardized in their layout. They commence with the date they were made. The first fines were actually dated to the exact day they were made in the king's court, but during the reign of King John the Bench started to date them by court return day. This means that they can be dated to return day periods of about a week. However, it was the normal practice of the Eyres to date fines

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

to the day until the 1240s when they began to adopt the same procedure as the Bench.[19] Following the date, the names of the justices are recorded and then the names of the parties involved, the property in dispute, and the type of writ. The agreement itself comes next and usually concludes with the mention of a consideration payment made by one party to the other. The form of the agreement itself could vary greatly and often record detailed information about families, land property, place-names etc.

The structure and content of an early fine is noted in the following example, the first in the series for Shropshire, issued in 1196:

> "This is the final agreement made in the Court of the Lord the King at Westminster, on Monday next before the Purification, in the eighth year of the reign of King Richard. Before Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard, Archdeacon of Ely, Master Thomas de Husseburn, Richard de Heriet, Osbert Fitz Hervey, Simon de Patishull, Oger Fitz Oger, Justices, and other faithful men of the Lord the King who were then present there. Between John Lestrange, plaintiff and Thomas Noel and Margaret his wife, tenants of the third part of the land of Knokyn. Concerning which the assize of death of an ancestor was summoned between them in the aforementioned court. That is to say, that the aforesaid Thomas and Margaret acknowledged and rendered to the aforesaid John all the third part of Knokyn aforesaid, with its appurtenances, as it pertained to the aforesaid Margaret as her portion as a sister. To hold to him and his heirs, of the beforenamed Thomas and Margaret and their heirs. Doing therefore the twelfth part of the service of one knight for all service. And they will warrant that part to the aforesaid John and his heirs against all men, except the Welsh, or shall make an exchange with them of 30 solidates of land of their land in Salopshire. And for this fine and agreement the aforesaid John gave the aforesaid Thomas and Margaret all his lands of Myxle and of Bradehape, with all the appurtenances of those lands. To hold to them and to their heirs, of the aforesaid John and his heirs by the twelfth part of the service of one knight for all service and exaction. And the aforesaid John and his heirs will warrant to the aforesaid Thomas and Margaret and their heirs the aforesaid lands, or shall make an exchange with them of 30 solidates of land in their lands of Norfolk."[20]

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[20] PRO: CP25/1/193/1/1; W. K. Boyd, Shropshire feet of fines, A.D. 1196-1211, *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 2nd series, X, (1898), p. 308.

Although the original purpose of final concords was to resolve genuine disputes, they soon came to be used as a quick and cheap way of transferring land or property. The lawsuit became a fictitious one - the party who wished to acquire the property (the plaintiff) would sue the owner (the deforciant) for its supposed recovery. By final concord, the property would be granted to the plaintiff and the deforciant would receive a sum of money in apparent compensation.[21] Although a few of the original files of feet of fines are known to have been lost, and some individual fines must have been lost, the series is basically complete and has no significant gaps. This is because from the thirteenth century onwards fines were regularly transferred from the clerks of the Bench and Eyres to the treasury where and recorded by indenture after being received by the Exchequer.[22]

Fines made in Eyres were originally filed by those Eyres, with fines made to concord foreign pleas involving properties in counties other than that in which the Eyre was being held. These were included in the same file as the home county fines. Archival endorsements on individual fines used as file covers have been considered as evidence of this procedure and an exception to this has been recognized whereby, in a small number of cases of early Eyres, fines were filed by circuit.[23] Bench produced fines were initially filed by term and 119 Coram Rege fines of the reign of Henry III survive in two modern files (CP25/1/284/18 and 19) which are believed to have retained their original arrangement. In the early fourteenth century the existing body of fines were re-filed by county, though still in distinct Bench and Eyre files. It is thought that this was to ensure ready accessibility as

[21] J. A. Kissock, 'Medieval feet of fines: a study of their uses with a catalogue of published sources', *The Local Historian*, 24, (1994), p. 66.

[22] Anon PRO ms., *op. cit.*, p. 4.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

they were frequently called for in court.[24] Kissock has suggested that the small holes punched in most of the fines are due to the documents being held together in bundles by ties running through the holes. The procedure may have been established during this period.[25]

This arrangement was altered in the late seventeenth century when the then custodian of the feet of fines and deputy Chamberlain of the Exchequer, Peter Le Neve, amalgamated the county series for Bench and Eyres around 1689. He also made annotations on the fines and transferred what he believed, often mistakenly, were fines that belonged to other counties.[26]

The fines were subject to another reorganization in the late nineteenth century. They were arranged, where possible, by county and in approximate chronological order and were bound, normally in blocks of 25 or 50, into modern files with red covers. Metal cases specially made for the purpose were used to store the files which were given new reference numbers. In 1977 the files were reboxed but retained the filing system and numerical reference system that had been established in the late 1800s.[27]

The feet of fines are now stored at the Public Record Office where they have been assigned the class number CP25. Those that are pre-1509 in date are grouped together in CP25/1 and those that are later in date in CP25/2. This research is concerned with the medieval series, CP25/1.

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[24] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[25] Kissock, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[27] Anon PRO ms., *op. cit.*, p. 4.

A number of the feet of fines have been published, usually by local history societies interested in particular regions. However, the quality and quantity of the published data varies very widely. Some counties have few or no published fines which means that the researcher who wishes to examine such fines has to work with the originals at the Public Record Office. Very few of the total number of fines have been published for Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, the chosen counties for this study. The only fines for Herefordshire to have been transcribed are a few pre-1216 documents in the national series arranged by the Record Commission and the Pipe Roll Society.[28] Gloucestershire and Shropshire are also covered in these works as well as being represented in some part by local history societies. The *Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society* has published excerpts from the series between 1205 and 1272.[29] A series of fourteenth century fines relating to the town of Bristol have also been published in *The Great Red Book of Bristol.*[30] The *Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* have published 229 fines relating to that county between 1196 and 1248.[31] Overall these transcripts represent a very small amount of the total 5317 documents, in the medieval series, relating to these three counties. The amount of information contained in the transcripts varies and the quality of the place-name identification can be suspect.

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[28] *Feet of fines, 1182-1196* (Pipe Roll Society, 17, 1894); *Feet of fines, 1196-1197* (Pipe Roll Society, 20, 1896); *Feet of fines,* 1197-1198 (Pipe Roll Society, 23, 1898); *Feet of fines, 1198-1199* (Pipe Roll Society, 24, 1900); *Fines sive finium.* 1195-1214 ed. J. Hunter (Record Commission, 2 vols., 1835 and 1844).

[29] *Pedes finium or excerpts from the feet of fines for the county of Gloucester, 7 John to 57 Henry III,* ed. J. Maclean, *Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society Transactions,* 16, (1892).

[30] E. W. Veale (ed.), *The Great Red Book of Bristol,* vol. 2 (Bristol Record Society, 1931).

[31] W. K. Boyd, Shropshire feet of fines, A.D. 1196-1211, *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society,* 2nd series, X, *op. cit.,* pp. 307-330; Shropshire feet of fines, A.D. 1218-1248, *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society,* 3rd series, VI, (1906), pp. 167-179; 3rd series, VII, (1907), pp. 379-389);, 4th series, I, (1911), pp. 385-401; 4th series, IV, (1914), pp. 161-177; 4th series, VI (1916-17), pp. 169-192.

Kissock has suggested that a shortcut to the study of the original documents may be provided by a catalogue of fines (1327-1422) contained in the Landsdowne collection in the British Library (volumes 306, 307 and 308).[32] These volumes were examined and then compared with a series of the original fines for Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. Although the catalogue represents a much easier way of gathering the most important fine data, the comparative study revealed that the catalogue was incomplete and, more worryingly, was, in many cases, inaccurate. The most frequent mistake in the catalogue appears to be the reversal of the names of the plaintiff and the deforciant. This would make a serious difference to any study of personal names and their role in the acquisition of land and property. There are also inconsistencies apparent in the catalogue's assessment of land. For example, in the Shropshire series of fines, a document issued in 1406 records the transfer of two messuages, a virgate of arable, two acres of meadow and two acres of wood from the Fletcher, Richard Prynce de Salop and Sibilla his wife, to Nicholas Jerard.[33] The catalogue neglects to mention any land for this fine. It was decided, therefore, to use all the original documents to create the dataset for this project. The relevant information from the 5317 documents was translated and transcribed onto index cards and then used to create a computer database of documents for the three counties.

2.4 Feet of fines as a source for the historian and the historical - geographer.

Kissock has established that feet of fines are a "valuable and underrated source for historians". He has shown that despite the fact that they have often been dismissed for

[32] BL: Landsdowne msss. 306, 307 and 308.

[33] PRO: CP25/1/195/20/13.

disputes, then it should follow that the information contained within the fines was also fictitious. It is true that the acreage mentioned in many of the fines appear to have been 'rounded up', but for the fines to have been of any value at all they must have described areas that were recognizable. Indeed many fines go to great lengths to describe a parcel of land and its location, and others contain measurements in fractions of acres. For example, a Shropshire fine of 1236 (mentioned in more detail in relation to past landscapes below) is concerned with the transfer of 100 acres of arable from Thomas Corbet to Nicholas, the abbot of Buildwas. The document goes to great lengths to describe the location of the land, mentioning dozens of minor place names and local features.[38] Similar documents appear for the other counties with detailed information about individual field names and local features, such as the meticulous breakdown of the two virgates of arable in Hidcote (Gloucestershire) transferred to Roger de Hidcote and Restwold de Hidcote from Henry son of Richard in 1220.[39] On a smaller scale, a fine issued in 1240 records the transfer of a parcel of land in Shrewsbury just 13ft long and 11ft broad. The land was obtained by Walram Poncer and his brother from Richard son of Hildebrand and Amice his wife.[40] Kissock has concluded the issue thus:

> "The feet of fines were records of a sale of land. Furthermore they were records which were preserved in court and which could be produced again should there be any real dispute over ownership. If the fines did not describe land accurately or at least provide enough information for it to be identified, their usefulness would be strictly limited. Hence it can be proposed that the acreages stated give a fair impression of absolute size and particularly of relative size of the lands involved."[41]

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[37] Kissock, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-82.

[38] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/82.

[39] PRO: CP25/1/73/4/6.

[40] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/113.

[41] Kissock, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

This writer's study of over 5000 fines reveals that the term *terra* must refer to arable land as there are many examples of fines where a distinction is made between *terra* and pasture, meadow and wood. For example, a fine transferring the manors of Stretford and Brocton (Salop) in 1402 also mentions 19 carucates, two virgates and 77.5 acres of arable *(terra),* 100 acres or meadow *(prati),* 40 acres of pasture *(pastura)* and 40 acres of wood *(bosca).*[42]

2.4(ii) Past landscapes: Evidence from the feet of fines.

Fines can provide evidence for open field agriculture and can be used to discover local patterns and the services owed by tenants.[43] For example, a fine from Shropshire, dated 1237, mentions the "customs and services" owed by one Robert de Hatton to the Prior of Wenlock for one and a half hides of land in Hatton.[44] These services included the payment of 20/- per year, suit at the Hundred Court of the prior of Burton and the provision of ten men for one day in the autumn to carry the prior's hay. Another Shropshire fine of the same period, between the abbot of Buildwas and Thomas Corbet and concerning 100 acres of land in Wentnor, provides a wealth of detailed information. There follows a transcript of this document to emphasize the amount of detail fines occasionally contain. It shows the importance they were regarded with in terms of the

[42] PRO: CP25/1/195/20/5.

[43] Kissock, *op. cit.,* p. 74; H. L. Gray, *English field systems,* (Cambridge, 1915).

[44] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/81.

conveyance of land and property. The fine also provides some important insights into medieval countryside management.

> " . . . Thomas acknowledged all the aforesaid land to be the right of the Abbot and his church, as that which they had of the gift of Robert Corbet, father of Thomas, whose heir he is. To have and to hold to the Abbot and his successors and the church aforesaid, of Thomas and his heirs, in pure and perpetual alms for ever, quit of all secular service and exaction. And further Thomas acknowledged the mill of Wentnor, with suit and fishpond, and with one messuage and the garden by the mill, to be the right of the Abbot and his Church with the ways ancient and accustomed, to the aforesaid mill, of Thomas and his heirs in free and perpetual alms for ever. Rendering thence yearly 12d at Wentnor at the feast of St. Michael for all secular services and exactions.
>
> Further the said Thomas granted that it shall be lawful for the Abbot and his successors and his church, to ditch and enclose all their land of Kynnerton and of Ulvesmor by the boundaries underwritten, in as good and commodious and in whatsoever manner, and with whatsoever inclosure as they wish, without impeachment of Thomas and his heirs for ever. That is to say, from the ford of Kynnerton round by the stream which is called Onye, to Shottesford, and so round by Cruklesbrok to Alrenbroc, and so round by Alrenroc to the place where Wythinbroc falls into the said Alrenbroc, and so round by the same 'deytum' under Hesenedon. So that the whole of Hesenedon remains on the side of the said Abbot and his successors, and so by the 'deytum' to Stanekesford and so to Blakesruding, and so to the land of the said Abbot of Hulesmor, that is to say, Shakeltre, and from Shakeltre to Longbirche, and thence to Stanhurst, and thence to the spring, and from the spring to Penlebrokesheved, and so back again by Penlebroc to Redhull, and so by Grethull and by Penlebroc into Ritonesbroc. And on the other side from the aforesaid ford of Kynnerton, by the 'deytum' which descends from Kynnerton to Le Sichet, which descends between Inlondes, and from the alder grove into Sichet in Rewinesmor, and so round by the same Sichet as far as the head of the same Sichet, and from the head of the same by the old thorn bush, and the boundaries and trenches, to the way on the Turf, and by the same way to another way which leads towards Linlee, and so directly against Weremmidell and Withiene Pull into the said Withienepull. So that it shall not be lawful for the said Abbot, his successors or the church aforesaid, to build in Rewinesmor or in Esindon. And if the game of the said Thomas and his heirs, that is to say, stags, hinds, bucks and does, he-goats and she-goats, woodland hogs and sows, enter within the aforesaid boundaries, the said Abbot and his successor and their men of Kynnerton shall drive out the aforesaid game if they wish, beyond the boundaries aforesaid, without hindrance of the said Thomas and his heirs, and without damage of the aforesaid game. So that it shall not be lawful to the Abbot nor his successors nor their men to hunt or take with any

engine any of the aforesaid game, nor to set nets or make fixtures except with the consent and by the will of the said Abbot or his successors. If the aforesaid Thomas or his heirs shall hunt any game with a pack of hounds from his forest, and in any way shall it enter into the land of the said Abbot and his successors within the boundaries aforesaid, it shall be well lawful to the said Thomas and his heirs to follow and take their game within the boundaries aforesaid, without damage of the said Abbot and his successors in corn and meadow. And if in any case any of the aforesaid game in whatsoever manner, shall be found dead within the aforesaid boundaries, the said Abbot and his successors shall not be vexed therefore nor have damage, by the aforesaid Thomas and his heirs unless it shall be shown that the said beast was killed by the aforesaid Abbot or his successors, and then the said Thomas and his heirs shall have that game and the Abbot and his successors shall give to the said Thomas and his heirs for that game so shown to have been killed, in the name of amends, for a stag or a hind, 5/-, for a buck or a doe, hog or sow, 3/-, for a he-goat or she-goat 12d. And further the said Thomas granted for himself and his heirs as much as to them pertains, that if the cattle of the said Abbot or his successors enter into the forest or 'hay' of the aforesaid Thomas and his heirs, by escape, they shall give the said Abbot and his successors for each ox, bull, cow, horse or mare 3d, and for the escape of 4 pigs, 1d, and for the escape of 5 sheep, 1d, and for the escape of calves, little pigs and lambs, nothing. And it is known that it shall be well lawful to the said Abbot and his successors, and his Church aforesaid, to ditch and enclose all the tenements aforesaid, with the appurtenances, but that the aforesaid is saving to Thomas and his men the ways underwritten. That is to say, from the ford of Kynerton, towards Norbyn, one; and another towards Wentnor; a third at Shobaford, towards Rotelingchop. A fourth at Crokelesbroc towards Stutte. A fifth at Haspeneford towards Pontesbir. A sixth beyond Hesenedon towards Hablegh. A seventh between Murcherk and Alrenemor. An eighth at Penbay. A ninth at the head of the Badesmor, by the cross. A tenth towards Hope. An eleventh towards Mundgumery. A twelfth towards Linlee. A thirteenth at Wythienepul. A fourteenth at Wermundel. And it shall be well lawful to the Abbot and his successors and the Church aforesaid to make easements to each of the aforesaid ways if they wish, without hindrance of the said Thomas and his heirs. And for this acknowledgement, etc., the said Abbot gave to the aforesaid Thomas 10 marks of silver. And this agreement was made in the presence of William the reeve, Kenewrec, son of Hodelow, William le Roter, Tudur, son of Grifun, Lewelin, son of Abraham, Maddoc Sulac, Kenewrec, brother of the same, Adam Buntan, Robert Gogh, Walter le Panner, Eynun Hare, John Le Panner, Adam Yarnemuth, Symon, son of William, Roger Pewyn, Kenenard de Shelve, Eynon Penwen and Roger le Scot, who quitclaimed for themselves and their heirs, to the aforesaid Abbot and his successors and the Church aforesaid, all right and claim which they had in all

common of pasture of Ulvesmor and of Rittone within the boundaries aforesaid forever."[45]

Fines can also provide details concerning the importance of common land for pasture and the establishment of sheepfolds. In 1236 the abbot of Buildwas obtained, by final concord, common of pasture in Onslow (Shropshire) from Roger de Onslow. The fine informs us that the abbot had a grange in Moeles, adjacent to Roger's land in Onslow and establishes that if any of the abbot's sheep enter Roger's land then he is to drive them back and not impound them - unless they are found in his corn or his meadows. In consideration, the abbot gave Roger 120 sheep and one sheepcote. The importance of dung is implied, as it is mentioned, as part of the consideration, that Roger would be able to keep the dung of the 120 sheep for his own use.[46]

Fines also provide information about the use of woodlands. Another Shropshire fine, relating to a dispute between the prior of Wenlock and Walter de Clifford in 1231, shows how woodlands were used for a variety of purposes. The prior was complaining about Walter's foresters who were preventing him and his men from enjoying certain hunting rights and common of pasture within the woods of Dodinton and Stove near the Clee Hills. The settlement allowed the prior to enclose 40 acres of woodland "measured by a perch of 20 feet", to turn over into arable and to have common of pasture throughout the forest for all kinds of cattle, oxen, flocks and pigs and for the stud of horses. It also allowed the enclosure of pasture within the wood to prevent the entrance of woodland beasts. The importance of foresters in the guarding of venison is also established in this

[45] PRO: CP25/1/1/193/3/82.

[46] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/84.

fine which states that the foresters do so according to the "manner and custom of the foresters of England".[47]

Such individual fines provide insights into past rural life; other information included in these documents can includes the location of mills, fish pools and information about the mowing of meadows and the price of cart loads of corn. As Kissock has stated, "the value of feet of fines in reconstructing past landscapes has yet to be exhausted".[48]

2.4(iii) The land market and prices.

The majority of feet of fines record the transfer of land. Most fines contain a 'consideration' payment, usually in cash. Because many of the disputes recorded were fictitious, it has been assumed that the monetary figures were also fictitious or, at best, could not be relied on as evidence of the price of land. Although it sometimes appears that the figures may have been 'rounded up', there are many examples of detailed payments and renders contained in the feet of fines. It seems illogical to suggest that the figures were plucked out of thin air and bear no relation to the value of the land or property being transferred. We know that the land described was actually being transferred from one party to another and that the agreement became a permanent record in the king's court. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the information contained in this legal document was accurate; that the procedure used was fictitious is almost irrelevant.

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[47] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/72.

[48] Kissock, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

2.4(iv) Urban development and feet of fines.

Fines not only provide information about the transfer of rural land, they also record property transactions in towns and can be used to show urban development. There are a particularly interesting series of fines for Bristol, which appear to show a very buoyant property market in the city in the fourteenth century. For example, in 1368 Roger Spicer de Bristol obtained eight messuages, thirty shops, a cellar, ten acres of land and 23/- rent in Bristol and its suburb from Richard son of Roger de Cobyngdon.[49] There are similar documents relating to the important centres of Gloucester, Hereford and Shrewsbury, and smaller towns such as Tewkesbury, Leominster, Weobley and Ludlow.

Such urban fines also provide information about the occupations of town-dwellers and other details such as the transfer of gardens and of the duties and customs of craftsmen. When such fines are compared with other documents for the same town, which also contain personal names, for example subsidy rolls, it becomes possible to build up a quite detailed picture of the urban life of individuals. This will be explored further below (section 2.5) along with an examination of how fines can be used to examine the development of market towns (section 2.6iii).

2.4(v) Place-names and personal names.

Since the majority of fines record place-names they are a very important source for their development. They have been used frequently by the English Place-names Society in the compilation of their county volumes, and this researcher's transcriptions of the Herefordshire feet of fines are being used by John Freeman, the editor of the volume for

[49] PRO: CP25/1/78/74/469.

that county, which is in production at the time of writing. Another asset of fines relating to the study of place-names is that they often record not only the main settlement (frequently identifiable with parish boundaries) but also smaller settlements within the main settlement and the names of fields and other landscape features. For example, the Shropshire fine relating to 100 acres of land in Wentnor, mentioned earlier, records in excess of 50 minor place-names within the region, including such details as the stream which is called Onye and the ford of Kinnerton, and local features such as an alder grove, an old thorn bush, pools, boundary stones and crosses.[50]

The same fine also establishes the importance the documents hold in the study of personal names. Feet of fines not only contain the names of the parties involved in the transaction, they often record spouses and children and contain the names of the justices and often witnesses and attorneys. The fine mentioned above contains the names of 18 witnesses to the agreement. The family names of the people recorded in fines not only provide clues to the family history of individuals they also frequently give occupational names. For example, in 1378 Hugh de Haresfeld obtained a messuage, a toft, one carucate of arable, six acres of meadow and four acres of wood in Bishop's Frome (Herefordshire) from John Le Carpenter and Edina his wife and Thomas Butler and Cecilia his wife. This wealth of details has been used by the survey of English surnames,[51] and with the development of digital technology there seems little doubt that fines will play a major part in the construction of databases of personal names.

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[50] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/82.

[51] Kissock, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

2.5: The categories of society who used fines as a way of conveyance.

Clanchy has made the following statement:

> "The use of feet of fines was of course confined to the more prosperous landholders, who were able to pay the fees and take the risk of litigating in the king's court."[52]

While this assumption does, at first, seem reasonable, close study of all the parties involved in the process reveals that a wider cross-section of society appears to be using final concords than Clanchy's statement suggests. To test this hypothesis it has been necessary to make a comparative study involving the early fourteenth century fines for the city of Bristol and the data from the 1327 Lay Subsidy Roll of Gloucestershire.[53] The Subsidy Roll contains a list of names of taxpayers and the region of Gloucestershire in which they were liable. Sometimes the occupation of the person is given and the Bristol section lists the quarter of the city the person lived in. The names of the Bristol taxpayers were compared with a list of personal names taken from feet of fine users in Bristol for the period 1307-1347 (20 years either side of the subsidy date of 1327). There were 144 users of fines in Bristol during this period which compares with 446 Bristol taxpayers in 1327. Thirty-nine names were common to both lists. The average tax paid by the 39 was almost double the average tax paid by the remaining 446. Of the 39 mutual names, 19 used fines to obtain property, 13 used them to dispose of property. The average tax paid by the 19 was almost three times the average paid by the total 446, and over four and a half times the average paid by the 13 who were disposing of property. The 13 paid approximately

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[52] Clanchy, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[53] P. Franklin, *The Taxpayers of Medieval Gloucester,* (Stroud, 1993).

three quarters of the average figure paid by the 446. This brief analysis shows that the people who used feet of fines as a way of acquiring property tended to be from the very wealthy elements of the community and certainly from the middle to upper 'tax bracket.' However, we must remember the people who used feet of fines as a way of disposing of their property. Although it is reasonable to assume that the party acquiring the property was often the instigator of the transaction, this may not always have been the case. Furthermore, there remains some 105 names who appear as feet of fine users in Bristol in the period 1307-1347 but do not appear as Bristol taxpayers. Of these people, about ten appear to have been taxpayers in other parts of Gloucestershire and some may have been too young to pay tax in 1327 or may have died in the intervening years. However, it is likely that a sizable number were adults living in Bristol in 1327. Even if a time span of just five years either side of 1327 is used, there remain some 16 names who were feet of fine users but not taxpayers. Approximately twice as many of the feet of fine users who were not taxpayers were disposers of property.

It appears that feet of fines were used by members of society who were not taxpayers along with those who were. Both categories used fines for the acquisition and disposal of property, although the wealthier elements accounted for most of those involved in acquisitions. The comparison of feet of fines with other sources shows their versatility - by using them more and more information can be massed to get a better picture of medieval society.

2.6 Feet of fines and the historical-geographer: Past uses.

2.6(i) Land use patterns.

The first person to use feet of fines to examine changes in land use over time was Frances Gardiner Davenport in 1897.[54] She believed that feet of fines were a source of "great value" that had not "received the attention" they deserved. She used the feet of fines for Staffordshire, between 1327 and 1587, to trace the conversion, in that county, from arable to pasture. She stated the following about feet of fines as a source,

> "Feet of fines are important as sources for agrarian history, because they distinguish between pasture, meadow, arable and waste and give the acreage of each. A series of feet of fines extending over a considerable period might therefore be expected to reflect such agricultural changes as altered the relative proportion of the different employment's of land."[55]

One very important feature noted by Gardiner Davenport that must be addressed is the obvious difference between sixteenth century fines and the medieval fines. She noted that in the sixteenth century each fine usually conveyed three or four kinds of land whereas in the fourteenth century the majority of fines recorded the transfer of arable only and that the total area of arable far exceeded that of any other type of land. Gardiner Davenport did not view this situation as a problem to the use of fines as a source once the nature of the land conveyed by the fines was understood. The land transferred was freehold only, either manors or freehold tenements within manors. She recognized that up to the sixteenth century the fines gave the acreage of tenements only, not of manors, and that in the sixteenth century the majority of fines still related to tenements. Although it was not

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[54] F. Gardiner Davenport, 'The agricultural changes of the fifteenth century', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XI (1897), pp. 205-10.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

always clear whether the area of the manor was stated or not, she claimed that, "the inclusion or omission of doubtful cases does not materially alter the proportions of arable land to other land."[56] Perhaps the most important point made by Gardiner Davenport relating to the difference between medieval and early modern fines is as follows:

> "As the alienation, on the face of them concern whole tenements, the difference indicated by a comparison of the fines of the sixteenth with those of the fourteenth century is a difference in a relative extent of the various kinds of land that constituted an average freehold tenement."[57]

Gardiner Davenport examined the situation further by explaining the communal unenclosed meadow, pasture and waste were held by the lord of the manor with the freehold tenant usually enjoying certain rights on this communal land. Therefore, the small amounts of meadow, pasture and waste that appear in the earlier fines and "would seem to be parcels of enclosed land held in severalty; and the change in the relative extent of the various kind of land would seem to reflect the increase of enclosed and separate land".[58]

Once this issue had been examined, the feet of fines proved to be an excellent source for Gardiner Davenport's study and she was able to plot the course of a "revolution" which occurred in Staffordshire. As the cases of pasture land held "in severalty" increased in feet of fines, so it was possible for Gardiner Davenport to date the change accurately, stating that:

> "From an examination of the fines, then, it is clear that sheep-raising was introduced into Staffordshire by the middle of the fifteenth century, and that it was prosecuted to such an extent that as large a part of the land of freehold tenants was used for pasturage as for tillage."[59]

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[56] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 206-7.

[58] *Ibid.* pp. 206-7.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

More recently, Christopher Dyer has used the Warwickshire feet of fines to examine land use patterns in that county.[60] He used them to compare two distinct regions of Warwickshire: the Feldon (a district with large areas of open field agriculture and numerous villages) and the Arden (a woodland region which also contained large tracts of arable along with grassland and trees). His examination revealed that the land recorded in fines in the mid-fourteenth century in the two regions was, for the most part, arable but with a much higher proportion of pasture and wood in the Arden. By the end of the fourteenth century, however, he calculated that arable accounted for only 57% of the total in the Feldon and 34% in the Arden. The share of pasture increased in both regions to a third or more of the total. Dyer believes this situation to be the result of two processes:

> "The conversion of arable into pasture and the enclosure of waste and common pasture, so that grazing land excluded from earlier fines was included in those of the late fifteenth century".[61]

Dyer has also noted that evidence of a "similar pattern of change in land use" is contained in the feet of fines for Staffordshire and recognizes that other sources "tell a fairly consistent story" of arable decline in the West Midlands proving that fines can be useful for an analysis of this kind.[62]

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[60] C. Dyer, *Warwickshire Farming, 1349 to c. 1520: preparations for agricultural revolution,* (Dugdale Society Occasional Paper, 27, 1981); C. Dyer, 'Documentary evidence: problems and enquiries', in G. Astill and A. Grant (eds.), *The Countryside of Medieval England,* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 12-35.

[61] Dyer, *Warwicksire, op. cit.,* p. 10.

[62] C. Dyer, 'Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. III, *1348-1500,* ed. E. Miller, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 78-79.

Andrew Watkins used feet of fines in his study of cattle grazing in the Forest of Arden in the later Middle Ages.[63] Watkins believes that studies of pastoral farming have been overlooked in comparison to studies of cereal production. Studying the changes that occurred in land use in the Arden he claims that "the best indication of this is given by the type and amount of land recorded in concords". Tabulating his results from a sample of published fines for Warwickshire, 1345-1509, he claimed that a "decisive movement towards pasture in the Arden came in the period 1410-1430".[64]

Kissock has outlined the way in which feet of fines can be used to map changes in land use over time. He has used data gathered from a sample of Wiltshire fines, 1295-1505, to produce maps that clearly show how the contrasting "chalk" and "cheese" regions of that county developed into distinct areas throughout the course of the medieval period. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the proportions of arable, pasture and meadow recorded in the fines were unvarying throughout the whole of the county, with arable the dominant element. By the fifteenth century this countywide pattern no longer existed and had been replaced by two distinct regional patterns.[65]

Kissock has shown how feet of fines can be used for a countywide study. An important point that arises from his investigation is the need to set the evidence gained from feet of fines against a wider background study of the county in question. For example, the dominance of arable in Wiltshire fines of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries should not be used to assume that other types of farming were not important. It

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[63] A. Watkins, 'Cattle grazing in the forest of Arden in the latter middle ages', *Agricultural History Review*, 37 (1989), pp. 12-25.

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[65] Kissock, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-73.

is known that prior to 1350 Wiltshire was "a great wheat and sheep county, with some interest in dairying".[66] Kissock believes that during this period the "pattern of specialization was clearly on a manor-by-manor basis and not a region-by-region basis". He has examined 69 *Inquisitions post mortem* for Wiltshire, *c.*1260 - *c.*1360, to support the view that "the distinction between arable and pastoral villages, and therefore between chalk and cheese landscapes, was not observable in the thirteenth century and that corn was the main product of the economy, regardless of the animal resources of particular areas". A clear divergence from this pattern had emerged by the seventeenth century whereby the chalk region in the south of the county had a mixed economy of corn growing and sheep rearing. The large flocks of sheep were pastured on the arable which they manured to ensure successful corn production. The cheese region in the north depended on cattle: their milk was churned into butter and cheese and was the basis of the agrarian economy of that region. Kissock explains that sheep were rare in this area and arable farming was primarily concerned with the production of winter feed.[67]

Kissock claims that the feet of fines provide, an ideal source through which this change from universal "wheat and sheep" to two regions of "chalk and cheese" can be studied. His examination of the Wiltshire fines revealed a general trend, familiar to other studies which have used fines as a source; "the proportions of arable land declined whilst the proportions of pasture and wood increased over time". However, Kissock's study has revealed that "behind this general pattern ... there lie subtler ones". By dividing Wiltshire into eight regions he has been able to analyse these subtler changes. For example in his

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[66] H. E. Hallam, 'Farming techniques: Southern England', in H. E. Hallam (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* vol. 2., *1042-1350,* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 362.

[67] Kissock, *op. cit.,* pp. 70-73.

central west area (the core of the chalk region) the proportion of arable recorded in the fines was always high whereas in the areas making up the cheese region there occurred a rapid decline in the proportion of arable in the fifteenth century. In the northwest areas the decline in arable appears to have occurred quickly between 1400 and 1450.[68] These findings are important because they reveal how feet of fines can be used to show changes in land use in a very localized way, allowing a more detailed examination of the overall changes that occurred in a particular county.

Rodgers has used post-medieval fines to study land use in Lancashire. He examined the amounts and proportions of arable, pasture and meadow in each township and was then able to outline a series of land use regions for that county.[69]

2.6(ii) Past landscapes and the land market.

Gray examined feet of fines in his study of English field systems. He used them to establish the extent of two-and three-field systems that were used in a variety of townships throughout a number of counties.[70] Kissock has also used the fines for Wiltshire and Yorkshire to establish evidence of local field system patterns, such as the eleven acres divided into several parcels in two fields which was granted to the Abbey of Furness in 1246.[71] He has shown how the services of tenants are often mentioned in fines transferring large areas of land, and has highlighted examples of how fines often mention countryside practices such as the use of woodlands and fisheries, the process of enclosure and

[68] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

[69] H. B. Rogers, 'Land use in Tudor Lancashire: the evidence of the final concords, 1450-1558', *Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers,* 21 (1955), pp. 79-97.

[70] Gray, *op. cit.*

assarting, the establishment of sheepfolds and vaccaries, the use of timber for a variety of reasons and a whole variety of other informative practices.[72]

Kissock believes that it is "surprising that so little use appears to have been made of final concords in discussions of land transfers."[73] They have been used as part of a wider study of the thirteenth century land market by Sandra Raban.[74] Her findings appear to concur with Kissock's view that the values recorded in feet of fines actually do relate, in some way at least, to the value of the land conveyed by final concord.

2.6(iii) Feet of fines and the development of towns

Britnell has used the feet of fines for Essex to examine the importance of "minimal" boroughs for the study of medieval economic organisation.[75] He has argued that these boroughs were much more widespread in rural England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries than had previously been realized. The key to Britnell's use of fines lies in the fact that they often take the form of transactions of small parcels of land and property and, more significantly, are frequently concerned with a single, landless messuage. Britnell has stated that such messuages "were legally the equivalent of burgage tenements in a minimal borough".[76] He has shown how fines transferring property - but no land - usually relate to market towns and can therefore be used to indicate the

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[71] Kissock, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[74] S. Raban, 'The land market and the aristocracy in the thirteenth century', in D. Greenway, C. Holdsworth and J. Sayers (eds.) *Tradition and change: essays in honour of Marjorie Chibnall,* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 239-61.

[75] R. H. Britnell, 'Burghal characteristics of Market Towns in Medieval England', *Durham University Journal*, 73, (1981), pp. 147-151.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

development of these centres. Using this theory it has been possible to examine the evidence for such boroughs in the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire.

2.6(iv) Other uses

Kissock has demonstrated how feet of fines can be used for a variety of other purposes other than the more obvious ones stated above. For example he has used them to establish the whereabouts of mills in Derbyshire and has noted that the transfers there differed from those in Wiltshire. In Derbyshire fractions of mills were frequently conveyed, whereas in Wiltshire whole mills were generally transferred. He believes this is representative of the difference between seigniorial and peasant mills; in areas where arable production was dominant and lordship strong the right to own a mill was "profitable and jealously guarded". In other regions mills may have been held by the community which may explain the need to transfer fractions of mills in certain places.[77]

Kissock has also shown how individual fines can be used to establish interesting facts about medieval society such as the development of trade and crafts, butchery practices, diet, farming methods and even the general attitudes of people. For example, he describes how one fine highlights the anti-Semitic character of medieval English society; in 1208 the Earl of Essex forced Richard of Wappenbury to agree that he would not pass on the land he had obtained "to a Jew or any other".[78]

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[77] Kissock, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.

2.7: Feet of fines and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth-century

One of the most interesting features of the data analysed in this research has been the sharp increase in the number of fines issued in the first half of the fourteenth-century. This data is looked at in detail in subsequent chapters but it seems clear that there is a relationship between the number of transfers of land and property and the period of crisis that has been recognized by historians in the first half of the fourteenth-century.[79] In this period all three counties studied show a dramatic increase in the number of fines issued, in the average number of fines issued per year and in the average acreage of land transferred per year (see tables H8, S3 and G2). Furthermore, it should be noted that Britnell recognised this correlation in his examination of the Essex fines. He has stated that:

> "Heavy mortality often caused property to change hands more quickly than usual, and this may account for the large numbers of fines from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, nineteen of them from the three famine years 1315-17". [80]

The famine of 1315-17 had a devastating effect on the population and the correlation between the number of fines issued and the critical years of the famine is clear in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. The average number of fines issued in the three counties in the period 1300-50 is eleven. In the period 1315-17 the average is eighteen. In Herefordshire there were 20 fines issued in 1315, in Shropshire there were 22 in the same year and in Gloucestershire there were 28 issued in 1316. In each case this

[79] For example see, B. M. S., Campbell (ed.), *Before the Black Death: Studies in the 'Crisis' of the early 14th Century*, (Manchester, 1991).

[80] Britnell, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

represents a very unusual pattern. The data is displayed in tabular and graph form in the subsequent chapters with an analysis of the crisis in each county.

To test the hypothesis that feet of fines are an important source for analysis of the "crisis" of the early fourteenth-century, they have been compared with another source that is widely acknowledged in studies of this subject, the *Norarum Inquisitiones.*[81] These inquiries were concerned with agricultural production during the year 1341. The jurors involved in the collection of the information used, as a guide, the assessment of clerical incomes collected in the taxation of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291. In many cases the value of the ninth of 1341 was found to be less than the value of the tithe of 1291. The explanation was often claimed to be due to an increase in uncultivated and infertile land in a particular area during the ensuing period. Therefore, they can provide important evidence for the abandonment of arable land in the early fourteenth-century.[82]

There are some notable correlations between the fines issued in the early fourteenth-century and the places mentioned as experiencing difficulties in the *Norarum Inquisitiones.* For example, of the 243 Shropshire parishes, 62 are noted in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* as having values lower in 1341 than 1291. All these places are represented by final concord transactions during the period 1290-1341. For example in Burford, a parish singled out as having uncultivated and infertile land, there were ten separate final concord transactions during the period 1314-17. This is particularly interesting as it coincides well with the years of the Great Famine. Indeed, when the famine period is examined in more detail there is even greater correlation with fines (see map B1). Of the

[81] *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Seaccaria,* ed. G. Vanderzee (Record Commissioners, 1807).

[82] A. R. H. Baker, 'Evidence in the 'Nonarum Inquisitiones' of Contracting Arable Lands in England during the Early Fourteenth Century', *Economic History Review,* XIX, (1966), pp. 518-532.

54 Shropshire parishes identified in fines between 1315 and 1317, 33 coincide with parishes recorded as experiencing difficulties in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones.*[83]

Although the data in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* for Herefordshire and Gloucestershire is much less extensive than it is for Shropshire (see map B1), similar correlations can be identified. For example, in Leominster (Herefordshire), a parish with uncultivated land in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, there were more fines issued in 1315 than in any other year between 1280 and 1507. The Gloucestershire parish of Eastleach Martin is mentioned in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* as having six virgates of uncultivated land. It is interesting that the only mention of this parish in feet of fines is for the year 1317 when Adam de la Ferme and his wife Alice obtained two virgates of arable there from Bonaface de Cotes de Suthrop.[84]

Such evidence indicates that when used with care and compared with other sources, fines can prove very useful in the study of the "crisis" of the early fourteenth-century. The famine years stand out in particular as corn prices rose due to failed harvests and as a result people may have been forced to obtain land to grow food. Rising mortality ensured that there was more land available, creating a buoyant market.[85] This would account for the marked increase in the number of fines issued during the years 1315-17.

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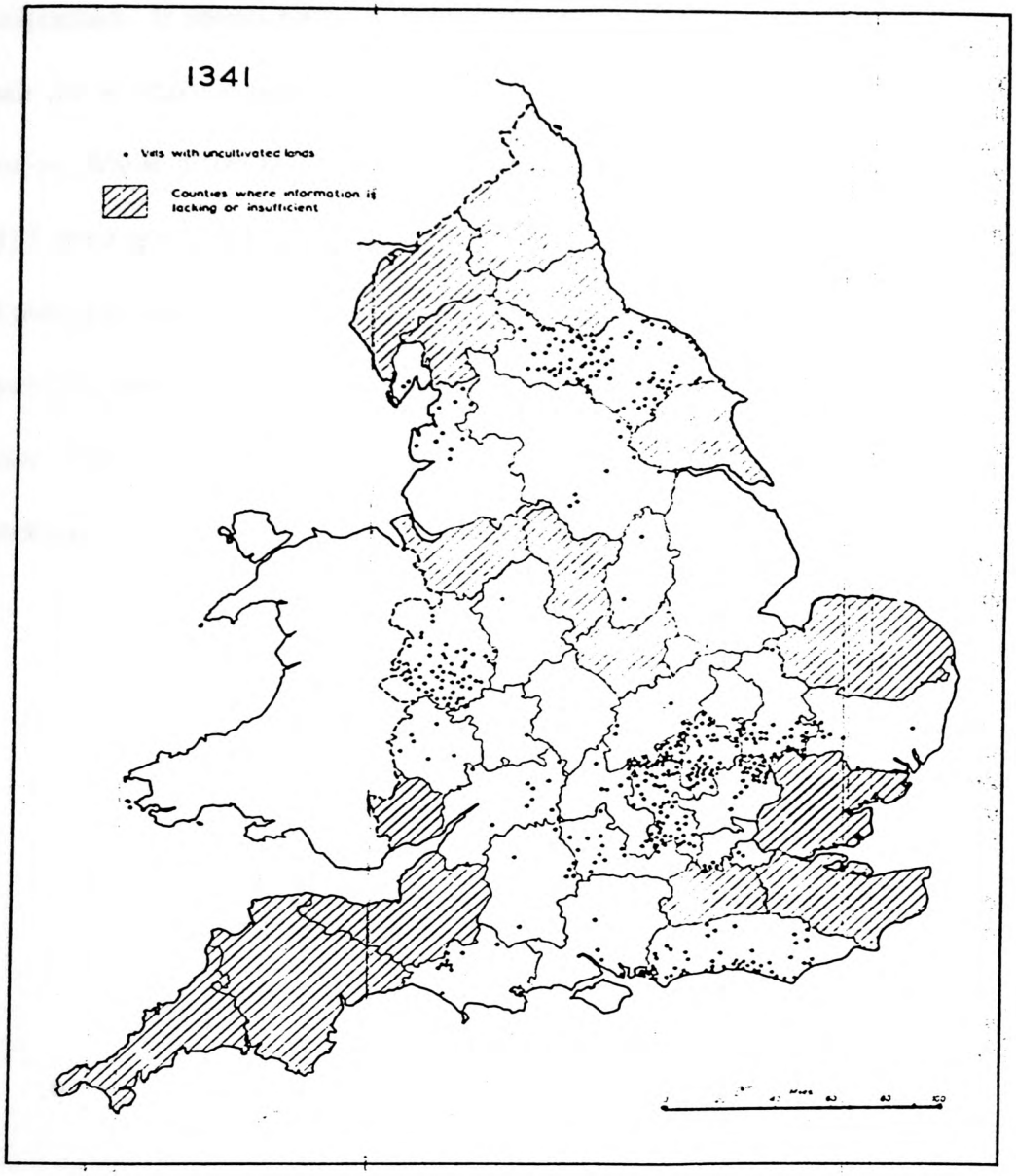
[83] *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Seaccaria, op. cit.*, pp. 183-194.

[84] PRO: CP25/1/76/49/185.

[85] M. Stinson, 'Assarting and Poverty in Early Fourteenth Century Western Yorkshire', *Landscape History*, 5 (1983), pp. 53-67; I. Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322, *Past and Present*, 59 (1973), p. 37; J. A. Kissock, 'Farms, Fields and Hedges: Aspects of the Rural Economy of North-East Gower, c. 1300 to c. 1650', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, CXL (1991), p. 143.

B1: Evidence of vills with records of uncultivated lands in 1341 (after Baker).



2.8: Conclusion.

This chapter has aimed to introduce the documents held at the Public Record Office, known as feet of fines. It has described how they developed as a popular method of conveyance and highlighted their value as a source for the historian and the historical-geographer. It shows how the data contained within fines is varied and wide and can be used for a whole range of different studies. To date, fines have been under-used as a source. Whilst it has been a very time consuming process translating and transcribing the 5317 documents, which form the basis of this study, the process has provided a rich vein of untapped data for a period in which scraps of information can be used to reconstruct a more informed picture of the medieval past. Furthermore it has established the validity of fines - they might have been a legal fiction, but the information they contain is far from fictitious.

Chapter 3

Historical Geography and Computer Technology: An Overview.

3.1 Background.

Robin Butlin has stated that:

> "One of the most important technical advances in historical geography from the 1970s onwards has been the possibility, through the rapid extension and increased availability of powerful computing facilities and desk-top computers, of launching significant assaults on the major data sets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular, although the data from earlier periods has also been processed."[1]

Although many of the historico-geographical projects that have incorporated computer technology have been on a fairly small scale, the technological advances allowing for the ever-increasing capacity and ability of computers to handle ever larger data-sets has meant that some larger scale studies have been attempted. The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure have been involved in a number of large scale studies, demonstrated most notably by the work of Wrigley and Schofield, who used the data from 404 English parish registers to examine population trends.[2] Kain's statistics, taken from tithe files of the mid-nineteenth century, have been used to construct computer-produced maps[3] and Chapman has studied the amount and extent of parliamentary enclosure in England.[4] These studies have processed large amounts of

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[1] R. A. Butlin, *Historical Geography: Through the Gates of Space and Time,* (London, 1993), p. 88.

[2] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Scholfield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: A Reconstruction,* (London, 1981).

[3] R. J. P. Kain, *An Atlas and Index of the Tithe Files of Mid-Nineteenth-Century England and Wales,* (Cambridge, 1986).

[4] J. Chapman, 'The extent and nature of parliamentary enclosure', *Agricultural History Review* 35, (1987), pp. 25-35.

statistical and quasi-statistical data. The importance of storing full-texts is also great because such storage allows for a wide variety of statistical and content analyses.[5] Despite major problems due to the huge amounts of data involved, the computerizing of the text of Domesday Book[6] has established interesting new possibilities, such as the ability to produce even more maps than the 800 produced by Darby and his colleagues in the seven volumes of the Domesday Geographies produced between 1952 and 1977.[7] Perhaps the most significant large-scale study to take place has been Ell's work on the computer-mapped survey of the Religious Census of 1851.[8] The census is a statistical source and is therefore amenable to computer analysis. The study made the important point that care is needed with countrywide studies because the data for individual counties can have enormous variations within the individual counties themselves. The study has shown what can be achieved with the improvements in digital technology and computerized mapping.

On a smaller, regional scale, research using computer technology has been apparent from an even earlier date and accounts for the majority of studies. In the early 1970s Speck, Gray and Hopkinson were working on a computer analysis of Poll Books.[9] From the same period until the 1980s Overton was demonstrating the potential of computer mapping of an inconsistent data source; he used probate inventories (lists giving details of livestock, crops and equipment at the death of a farmer) to trace and examine the diffusion of cropping innovations in East Anglia from the early sixteenth to the early

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[5] Butlin, *op. cit.*, p.88.

[6] J. J. N. Palmer, 'Computerizing Domesday Book', *Transactions Institute of British Geographers*, NS11, pp. 279-89.

[7] Butlin, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

[8] P. S. Ell, *An atlas of religious worship in England and Wales: an analysis of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1992).

eighteenth century.[10] Overton used an arbitrary grid system superimposed on the area of study to produce maps, using the basis of allocation to the squares.

The importance of databases for records of conveyances has long been recognized. The DEEDS project was founded at the University of Toronto in 1975 with an objective to "provide computerized access to the content of twelfth and thirteenth century conveyances covering the county of Essex, England."[11] The project realized the potential of such a database for long-term study of the sources along with the need for flexibility when constructing the database to allow for varied study:

Flexibility is of paramount importance to the creation of a database. The project became aware, however, that it is difficult to achieve within a database for medieval history because of the fundamental inflexibility created by a context in which diverse levels of meaning are assigned to indistinguishable pieces of information. Nevertheless, the project has concluded, "conceptual hierarchy is not incompatible with a flexible structure", provided that a system of computer coding is used which can maintain structured data within a database, the relational design of which, enables the maximum flexibility in running queries.[12]

The DEEDS project gathered information from a variety of medieval manuscript sources, including approximately 2800 feet of fines for Essex. Because such documents

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[9] W. A. Speck, W. A. Gray and R. Hopkinson, 'Computer analysis of Poll Books: a further report', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* 48, (1975), pp. 64-90.

[10] M. Overton, 'Computer analysis of an inconsistent data source: the case of probate inventories', *Journal of Historical Geography* 3, (1977), pp. 317-26; M. Overton, 'Probate inventories and the reconstruction of agricultural landscapes', in M. Reed (ed.), *Discovering Past Landscapes,* (London, 1984), pp. 167-194.

[11] M. Gervers, G. Long and M. McCulloch, 'The DEEDS Database of Medieval Charters: Design and coding for the RDBMS Oracle 5', *History and Computing* 2, (1990), p. 1.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

often contain information relating to intricate patterns of transfer such as the exchange of rights and obligations the project realized the need to create a coding "language" to express the "multiplicity of detail and temporal nuances" apparent in medieval society.[13] Their success was dependent on the researcher's ability to "translate the content of an historical text into machine-readable form".[14] The coding language devised by the project is based on three "sentences" to describe connections between:

1. Two people.
2. Two pieces of property.
3. Persons and property.

The project used similar codes to connect actions, tense, number and mode and the information used to write the "sentences" is located in seven main tables:

1. Document.
2. Person.
3. Property/compensation.
4. Lease.
5. Relation.
6. Linkage.
7. Roll

There is also a variety of supporting code tables. The first four main tables are made up of information from the original document. The last three acknowledge the connections between persons (Relation), properties (Linkage) and persons and property

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

(Role). The project has found this system to be very flexible and easily modified for a wide variety of purposes.

Perhaps the most interesting development in digital technology as a tool for the historical geographer has been CAD (Computer Aided Design) and GIS (Geographical Information Systems). Some pioneers have already used these systems for historical geography projects; Winifred Schenk has examined the problem of the "cartographic reconstruction" of an earlier existing landscape by using the AutoCAD and Arc/Info systems.[15] The complex nature of such systems can lead to problems and much of the research appears to have been done on a trial and error basis; Schenk found AutoCAD to be a much more easily managed system for the questions he posed than Arc/Info. He found that AutoCAD could not, however, replace the "classical method" of comparing more recent maps with older verbal descriptions (retracing). He did, however, find that the system raised the precision of the procedure of "surface area determination" (a procedure that involves the linking of data found in archive sources with the reconstructed map).[16]

Robin Butlin has suggested that the reasons why the literature in the appropriate journals relating to the use of GIS and other computer applications in historical statistical data is still very scarce are the "difficulties of unevenness of historical data" and the "caution of historical geographers to move into these new methodologies".[17] Ell and Slater made a similar point relating to their study of the 1851 Religious Census:

> "The census is above all a statistical source and it is therefore amenable to computer analysis. That it has not yet been so analysed is perhaps a function of

[15] W. Schenk, 'The use of CAD and GIS systems in the reconstruction of large scale historical field systems and land utilization - an example from southern Germany', *History and Computing* 5, (1993), pp. 25-34.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[17] Butlin, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

> the lack of interest in the subject matter on the part of those historical geographers with the necessary skills, and a lack of the necessary skills on the part of those historians with an interest in the history of religion."[18]

Difficulties with the source data can be overcome; the DEEDS project has shown the way forward for medieval projects. The reluctance of historians and historical-geographers to move into new areas may not be due simply to a lack of interest but rather to the complex procedures involved in translating data into digital information that needs to be stored in a very flexible database (as highlighted by the DEEDS project). Such procedures require an in depth knowledge of computer programming. David Graham has highlighted some of the problems involved in using GIS systems for historical analysis; the main drawback, he believes, is the amount of time involved in database construction and manipulation.[19] Although he believes that the "gains derived . . . clearly outweigh any such drawbacks", he has found that the GIS system he used (Arc/Info) has "a host of inconsistencies and idiosyncrasies which serve to obfuscate matters for the user".[20]

There is a need for systems such as CAD and GIS to become more user-friendly and for historical-geographers to become more computer aware. If the use of such systems is to become more widespread in the field of historical geographer then it may be necessary for historical geographers to regard digital technology as a tool to replace or enhance some of the more classical methods of approaching the subject. The most recent research combining historical and digital expertise has emphasized the advances in the

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[18] P. S. Ell and T. R. Slater, 'The Religious Census of 1851: a computer-mapped survey of the Church of England', *Journal of Historical Geography* 20, (1994), p. 44.

[19] D. Graham, 'The use of a Geographical Information system in historical demography', *History and Computing* 7, (1995), pp. 61-63.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 61.

field, both in terms of the willingness of historical-geographers to embrace new methodologies and in the rapid improvements in computer technology and availability.

Since 1994 a team, headed by Humphrey Southall, has been working at Queen Mary & Westfield College, University of London, to build a historical Geographical Information System for Britain.[21] The system is based on the boundaries of a variety of units used to report official statistics such as the census, pre-1911 demographic reporting and pre-1974 administrative geography. These boundaries are changeable and include civil and ecclesiastical parishes, registration districts and sub-districts, county and municipal boroughs and rural and urban districts. The GIS includes a database of correlated statistics from a range of different sources. One of the long-term aims of the project is the making of an atlas which considers all the census returns from 1801 to the present. In the shorter term the project aims to create a "prototype" historical atlas which will basically be a more detailed, digitized, version of the *Atlas of Industrialising Britain.*[22]

There are a number of ongoing projects analysing medieval data and creating databases, such as that headed by David Crook at the Public Record Office in liaison with the University of Cambridge, which intends to compile a database of taxation records from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries.

The most comparable research to this project on the feet of fines is that being undertaken by a team headed by Ken Bartley and Bruce M. S. Campbell at the Queen's University of Belfast. This team is using *Inquisitions post mortem* (IPMs) and GIS technology to create a land-use map of medieval England. IPMs record the main land-uses

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[21] H. Southall and B. White, 'Creating an electronic historical atlas of Britain', *Geocal* 16 (June 1997), pp. 3-6.

[22] R. J. Morris and J. Langton, *Atlas of Industrialising Britain,* (London, 1986).

on the estate of a tenant-in-chief who had died. Crown appointed administrators (escheators) were ordered to assemble juries in the locality of the deceased to determine the value of his property and to ascertain who was the rightful heir or heirs. The IPMs record the value and size of land, major assets, such as castles, gardens, mills etc. and rents due to the lord. They provided invaluable information to the king concerning the sum of money he could look forward to receiving should an estate fall into his hands.[23]

Since 1991 a team of researchers has been engaged in the creation of a database of extant IPMs for the period 1300 to 1349. This process took two researchers, working at the Public Record Office, two years to complete. They analysed documents relating to 1,831 tenants-in-chief. The project suggests that the completed database can function as an "electronic book", to enable the rapid gathering of information about specific people or places. The database has also been joined to a SPANS GIS system to enable the mapping of the data, for example the mills owned by Gilbert de Clare.[24]

The aims of the group have been laid out in a paper which has appeared on their web site. The paper describes "the stages whereby data extracted from almost 10,000 original *Inquisitions post mortem,* dating from 1300 to 1349, are ultimately transformed into a national land-use classification map for the critical period immediately prior to Black Death".[25]

Bartley has summarized the importance of GIS in the field of historical-geography

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[23] K. Bartley, 'Mapping the *Inquisitions Post Mortem*', *Medieval Settlement Research Group,* Annual Report 11, (1996), pp. 30-33.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 32 (fig. 9).

[25] K. Bartley and B. M. S. Campbell, *Inquisitiones Post Mortem, GIS, and the creation of a land-use map of medieval England,* Unpublished Web-Site ms., The Queen's University of Belfast, Department of Economic and Social History, nd, http://www.qub.ac.uk/ss/esh/iredb/KBARTLEY., pp. 1-17.

thus:

> " GIS is providing historians with new ways to examine and combine historical sources. GIS will not, on its own, provide answers to the many questions concerning the geography of medieval England, but hopefully it will provide historians with the tools to ask new questions".[26]

3.2 Digital technology and feet of fines.

Feet of fines are an important source for the construction of a detailed database of a particular region or regions and perhaps ultimately a countrywide database. They have been used extensively in the DEEDS project. Their uniform layout enables the collection of information quickly and in a standardized form. The data collected from fines could be used to produce a very detailed dataset with information on families, personal names, land values and land use etc. The DEEDS project has highlighted the value of such a database but has also shown the problems that have to be resolved if the information is to be accessed and used successfully. This has meant that the DEEDS project has been an ongoing one since 1975.

Fines can also offer a number of advantages over well-established sources such as the IPMs. Fines were used by a broad section of society (see 2.5 above) whereas IPMs were concerned with the land of tenants-in-chief of the king. Bartley and Campbell have pointed out that IPMs provide more explicit land-use information than any other source until the tithe files of the early nineteenth century. However, the process involved in IPMs was a revenue-raising exercise and was therefore susceptible to variances in the efficiency with which the escheators carried out their work and also the "financial exigencies" of the Crown. The amount of surviving IPMs peak in the opening decade of the fourteenth

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

century when Edward I's various military campaigns led to greatly increased financial pressures.[27] Increases in the numbers of fines issued in a particular period are more likely to be indicative of a desire or need to obtain or dispose of land or property and can therefore be used to show trends such as the need to acquire land to grow extra food during times of crisis.

The main purpose of this research project, involving feet of fines, is to produce maps which can be used to test certain hypotheses relating to medieval land-use and settlement patterns in three counties: Herefordshire, Shropshire and Gloucestershire. The project began with the translation and transcription of the relevant information from the 5317 medieval documents, relating to the three counties. Information relating to the date of issue and place issued, the personal names of those involved in the transaction, the place or places the fine was concerned with, the land and/or property conveyed and the consideration payment made was collected on index cards. This was a very time consuming process, particularly when faced with damaged or faded documents and changing styles of handwriting.

The next stage involved the identification of almost 8000 place-names for the three counties, establishing the modern name and the relevant parish it occurs in. This process involved the consultation of sources such as the *English Place-Name Society* volumes. Some places were relatively easy to identify (such as the major towns), but others involved research based on the personal names of the parties involved in the transfer. For example, in 1220 Sibyl, the daughter of Walter, obtained seven acres of arable in Upton from Phillip

[27] Bartley and Campbell, *Inquisitions Post Mortem, GIS and the creation of a land-use map of medieval England,* Web Site ms., *op. cit.* p. 3

de Ockold.[28] There are a number of examples of the place-name 'Upton' in Gloucestershire. However, the involvement of Phillip de Ockold indicates that the transfer occurred in the vicinity of Ockold End which is in Upton St. Leonards.

Once the above stages were complete it was possible to begin transferring the data onto a computer database. The data was organised into tables such as DATE, PLACES, PEOPLE, LAND, PROPERTY and stored in MS Access in the form of three separate databases, one for each county. Some of the tables are very large, for example the personal names for the three counties amount to almost 20,000. All the tables within each database can be joined by means of their PRO call number, which is the common factor in each table. Once joined, a wide variety of queries can be run including the gathering of statistics, finding people and places, creating tables in other formats to create maps etc.

The next stage in the project involved the use of GIS technology to create, administer and manipulate digital maps of the three counties that could be linked to the databases. It was decided to use Arc/Info and its associated subsystems to create the maps because this package is, in many ways, the industry standard for the production and management of digital maps. Three maps were chosen which included the parish boundaries for each county. It was decided to organize the data on both a parish and a regional level. The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies originally published the maps chosen for digitization.[29] Gelling has used these maps in her study of Domesday hidages in the West Midlands.[30]

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[28] PRO: CP25/1/73/4/12.

[29] *Shropshire,* (Canterbury, 1983); *Herefordshire* (Canterbury, 1983); *Gloucestershire,* (Canterbury, 1996).

[30] M. Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages,* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 191-200.

Arc/Info includes functions for manually operated vector mode digitizing of existing maps. It was decided to use the ArcEdit subsystem because it has extensive interactive on-screen graphical editing facilities as well as enabling the direct digitizing of a map from a digitizing table. To create a digitized map, the original is stuck to a digitizing table and its coordinates set by entering TIC locations at each corner of the map. A boundary then has to be created to provide an approximate extent for the map to be used when plotting it on the screen. The extent and outline of the map can now be "drawn" onto the workstation screen. The next procedure involves the digitization of every arc on the map - in other words the boundaries of all the parishes on the map. At every cross-section a node is added to establish the polygon that will represent a parish.

Having digitized the coverage it is then necessary to edit the data in order to create a "clean" coverage which can be topographically structured with the *build* command which creates structured polygons. There is a need to remove dangling arcs, extend undershoots and join up nodes that should be equivalent.

Once the final, cleaned, maps had been produced, each polygon on each map was given an identity number. These numbers coincide with identity numbers given to each individual parish in each county database. The final procedure in ArcEdit is to create PAT files for each map. This allows the databases to be linked to the maps. The completed maps were then exported to the ArcView subsystem which enables the linking procedure and the creation of a final layout with the associated tables.

A desktop version of ArcView was used to create the final maps as they appear in the work. To produce the individual maps it was necessary to produce tables that could be used in ArcView. To achieve this queries were run using the databases in MS Access. The

queries allowed specific tables to be produced such as ones recording individual land types over a particular time period (usually 50 years). Such tables had to be produced for all the main land types for each county. It was decided to link the meadow and pasture data for the purpose of creating the maps because they both provide evidence of the change towards pastoralism in evidence in most counties in the later medieval period.[31] However, they were examined individually in the overall analysis of the data because regional differences needed to be considered, such as the lack of natural meadow in the Cotswolds compared to the more extensive wetland pastures in the Severn Valley. Both regions saw an increase in pastoralism in the later Middle Ages but in the Cotswolds it was, primarily, associated with sheep husbandry whereas in the Vale dairying was a prominent industry.[32]

When the various tables were produced (including those associated with property and people) they were then converted into DBase format (readable by ArcView). The files were saved in ArcView and were utilized in the production of three projects, one for each county. ArcView is very versatile and allows the analysis of the data contained in the tables before and after it has been linked to the map. It also allows the digitized map to be edited. For example, it was possible to merge the parishes of the original map to create a regional map which would still recognize the link to the various parishes as it appeared on the tables. This, in turn, allowed the analysis of regional tables which could be used to establish the percentage of pasture to arable for example.

The distribution maps simply record the acreages mentioned in fines in the form of one dot per acre. The individual tables can be linked to the digitized parish map in

[31] Kissock has used this approach in his study of the Wiltshire fines, see, J. A. Kissock, 'Medieval feet of fines: a study of their uses with a catalogue of published sources', *The Local Historian*, 24, (1994), pp. 66-82.

[32] See Chapter 6.

ArcView because the map has an attributes table which contains details of all its boundaries. One of the columns in this table contains numbers, established during the digitizing process, which refer to each individual parish. Number columns can be linked with similar columns in other tables and so it is possible to join the map attribute table to the tables which contain information about the overall acreages, over a certain time period, in each parish with data. Once the tables have been joined there is an editing stage which allows the data to be displayed, in a variety of ways, on the map. Once this has been achieved there is a further editing stage involved whereby the data is viewed as a page layout which can be adjusted and allows the addition of legends etc.

The production of the regional maps is a little more complex as groups of parishes have to be merged to form the regions and there is a need for cross table analysis to establish percentages. Two types of regional map were produced for each county. The first type considered the total acreages of all types of land. The amount for each region was examined and calculated as a percentage of the total. This procedure involved the creation of a table which contained the combined acreages of all the various types of land transferred in fines. These maps can be used to decide in which regions were the greatest amounts of activity occurring. The other type of regional map evaluates the percentage of individual land types to the total amount of land transferred. It was necessary to calculate, for example, the total arable of a given region against the total amount of all land types recorded in that region. These maps can be used to examine the change in land use on a regional level. For example a fall in the percentage of arable in a particular region and a subsequent rise in pasture can be considered indicative of a retreat from the arable. The regional maps are also useful because they display the percentages in relative terms. For

example a low number of fines issued in a certain region reveals a fragmented picture on the distribution map. However, if those few documents have a relatively high percentage of a particular land type in comparison to the total amount of land mentioned, then the regional map will reveal this situation more accurately.

3.3 Conclusion.

The advent of GIS technology has provided a powerful new tool for the historical-geographer. The project headed by Campbell and Bartley at the Queen's University of Belfast has shown the way forward for the analysis of medieval data. GIS can be used to analyse and display datasets and can reconstruct patterns by combining information from disparate sources.[33] Feet of fines have proved to be a very appropriate source for the creation of datasets which can be analysed by GIS. The following three chapters show how GIS technology can be utilized to analyse and display the data gathered from the medieval feet of fines for the chosen study area.

[33] Bartley and Campbell, *Inquisitions Post Mortem, GIS and the creation of a land-use map of medieval England*, Web Site ms., *op. cit.* p. 1.

Chapter 4

Herefordshire in the Feet of Fines

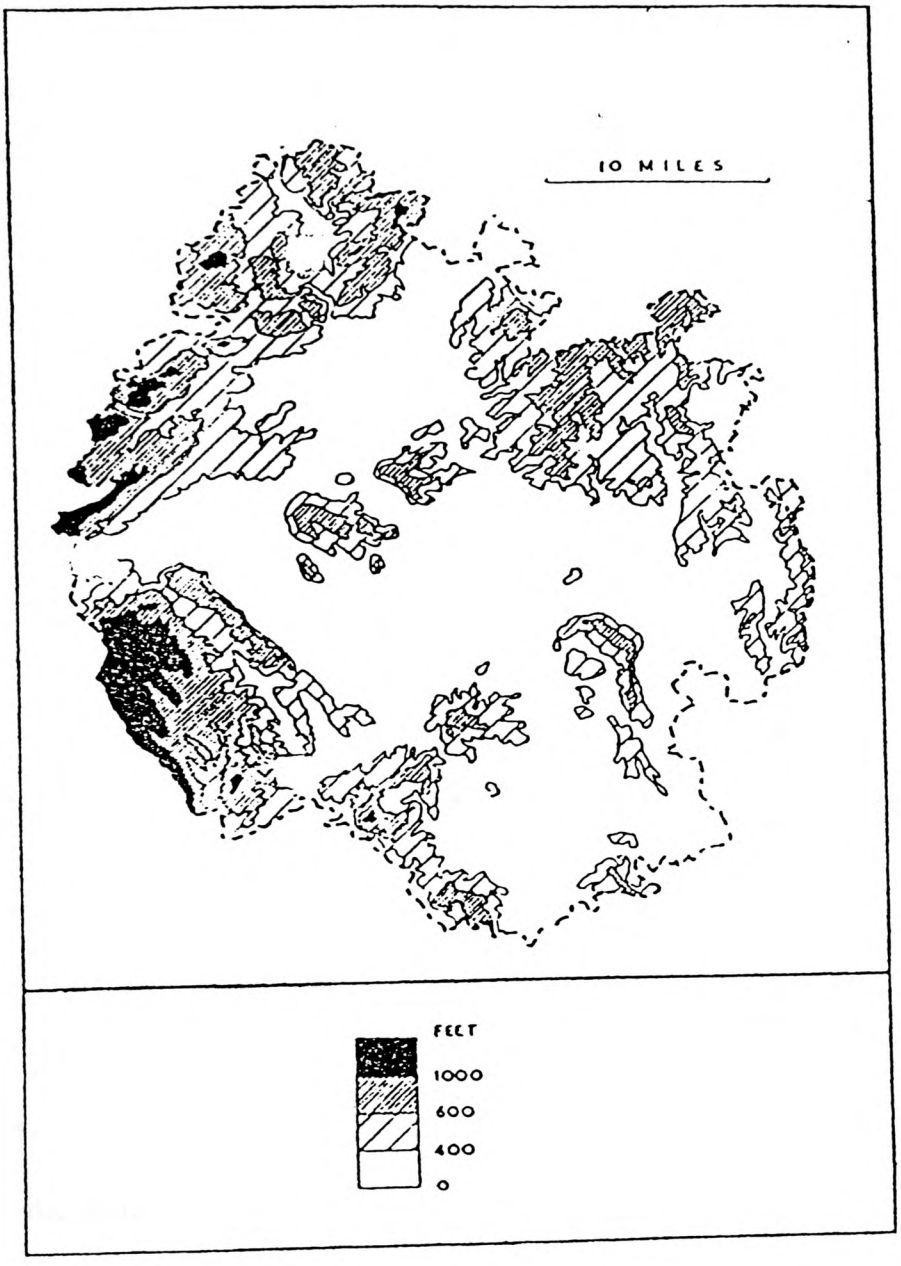
This chapter examines the data provided by the medieval feet of fines for Herefordshire. There are a total of 1401 fines for the period 1199-1507. The first was issued at Westminster in the first year of John's reign. It was concerned with the transfer of 21/- rent in Tedstone to Wimartha the wife of Robert from Thomas de Mar.[1] The following fine in the series, issued in the same year at Hereford, was the first to mention land in the county. It involved the transfer of three virgates of arable in Kingstone from Robert de Kingstone to Richard, son of Crete.[2] The last fine in the series was issued at Westminster in the twenty-third year of the reign of Henry VII. It involved the transfer of a messuage, a virgate of arable, four acres of meadow and two acres of wood in Upton Bishop, from Thomas Weste and Agnes, his wife to Jasper Grey, Richard Dobyns and Richard Jones.[3] The data from such fines will be used to show settlement patterns in medieval Herefordshire, along with landscape change over time. The various land types mentioned in the documents will be analysed to show the importance of particular types of agriculture in the various regions of the county. The chapter will begin with a regional survey based on other sources and will then explore how feet of fines can be used to provide a detailed, long-term data-set for the required studies. The chapter will include a series of tables,

[1] PRO: CP25/1/80/1/1.

[2] PRO: CP25/1/80/1/2.

[3] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/28.

H1: Herefordshire relief (after Atkin.)



graphs and maps, generated from the fine data, to show changes over time along with the effects of historical processes on the landscape.

4.1 Regional Survey

Much of lowland Herefordshire is dominated by a large, rolling, plain that is surrounded on all sides by a series of smaller regions that are quite distinctive in terms of their soils, geology and geography.[4] The western regions have close historical links with Wales and have been influenced, culturally, by that association. The River Wye, the main river, splits the county in two. There are several lesser rivers and streams that help to drain the county: the Teme, Lugg, Frome, Dore, Arrow, Leadon, Monnow and Garron (see map H2).[5] Much of the county to the south and west of the Wye was once a semi-autonomous Welsh district known as Archenfield (part of the old Welsh kingdom of Ergyng). In *The Domesday Geography of Midland England,* Atkin recognized nine regions of Herefordshire (see map H2). The following survey uses these regions as the basis for a description the various districts of the county.

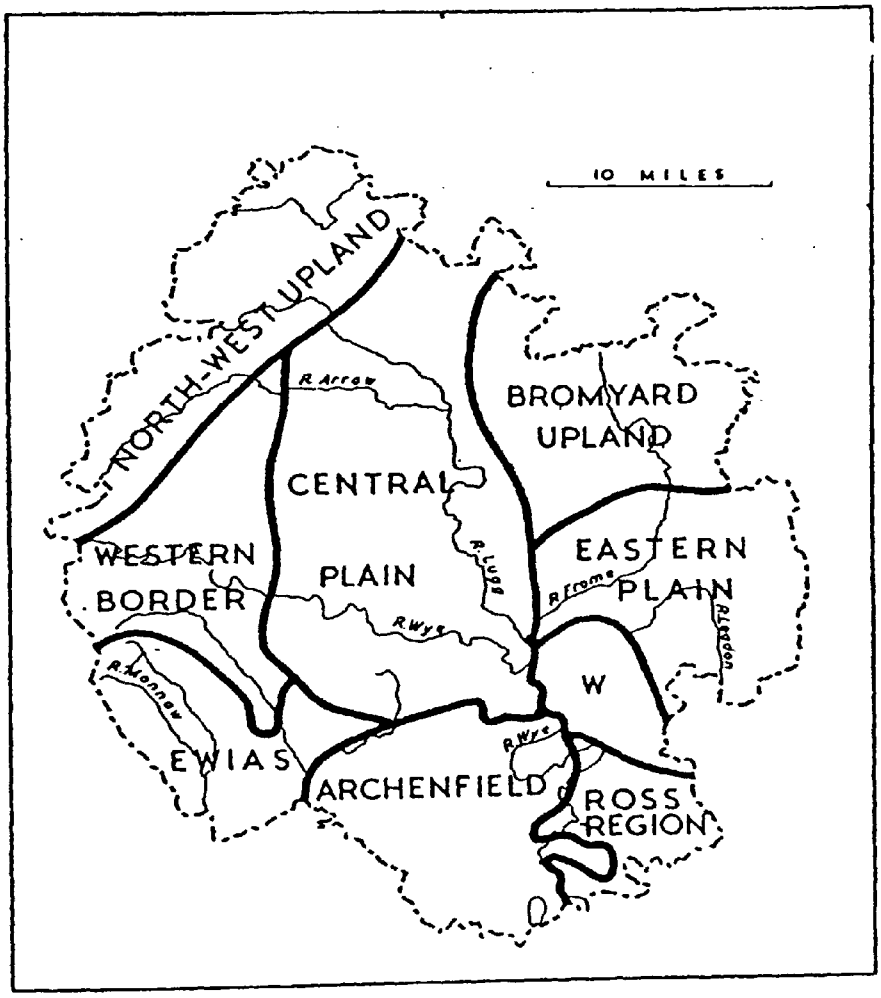
4.1(i) The Central Plain

The Dinmore and Wormsley Hills, which dissect this region, climb to over 700 feet and embody the highest land on the Plain. The rest of the region consists of a rolling plain

[4] C. W. Atkin, 'Herefordshire', *The Domesday Geography of Midland England*, ed. H. C. Darby and I. B. Terrett, (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 105-106.

[5] W. H. R. Curtler, 'Agriculture', *The Victoria History of the County of Hereford,* vol. 1, ed. W. Page (London, 1908), p. 407.

H2: Herefordshire regions (after Atken.)



that ranges in height from about 150 to 400 feet above sea level. The Plain comprises of much of lowland Herefordshire and in physical terms extends from the Welsh border in the west to the Malvern Hills in the east and from the edge of the Forest of Dean in the south to the Shropshire border, near Ludlow, in the north. This lowland region comprises well over half the total landmass of the county. Within the Central Plain, the Dinmore and Wormsley uplands separate the Plain of Hereford and the Plain of Leominster.[6]

Geologically, the Central Plain consists, primarily, of Old Red Sandstone covered by soft beds of red and grey marl. Different beds of more dense sandstone and cemented limestone form the more upland districts, represented by the Dinmore and Wormsley Hills.[7] The extreme southeast of the Plain (see the Ross Region below) has a somewhat different appearance due to a shortage of glacial drift, which has produced a sub-region particularly well suited to arable farming.[8]

It is likely that extensive tracts of woodland were being cleared on the Central Plain from an early date and that it had become a well-settled region by the eleventh century. Traditionally, the Plain has been considered to be a thriving agricultural region, particularly in comparison with the poorer upland districts in the west. Early settlement tended to follow the river valleys and became more scattered in the upland districts. The flooding of the Wye, Lugg and Arrow ensures that there are large tracts of meadow in this region and the undulating plain would have attracted arable cultivation in medieval times.[9]

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[6] T. Rowley, *The Landscape of the Welsh Marches*, (London, 1986), pp. 7-8.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

[9] Atkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

4.1 (ii) The Western Border

This is a lowland region that stretches to the Welsh border where it narrows between the edges of the upland districts of the Silurian Uplands in the north and the Black Mountains, in Ewias, in the south. In fact, the Western Border is a projection of the Central Plain running west along the Wye Valley and the Golden Valley. The soils of this region are mainly loams, either developed on the drift stone from the Wye Valley or on Old Red Sandstone. [10]

Despite its relationship with the Central Plain and its fertile river valley districts, settlement was slower to develop than on the Plain due to its precarious proximity to the Welsh border; the area was subject to great devastation in the 1050s (see section 4.2 below). It has been suggested that in the eleventh century the region was characterized as much by the conditions of border life as by its physical geography.[11] Therefore, as has been seen in Archenfield below, despite being, in many ways, part of a wider region, historical processes have led to diversification from the norm in terms of settlement and land use.

4.1 (iii) The North-West Upland

This hilly region has areas that, in places, exceed 1000 feet. The hills are part of the Silurian 'edges' which run into Shropshire to the north. The soils in those areas are very difficult to work; loams that are very stony and clays that are very unyielding. The

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

Wigmore basin is an interesting feature of the landscape. Gelling has described how it was formed by the collapse of a geological configuration known as the Wigmore Dome.[12] The basin lies between the Rivers Teme and Lugg that drain the region and has some good tracts of fertile farmland. Atkin has explained how the generally poor quality of the soils combined with the challenging topography of the region has meant that traditionally cultivation has been based in the valley lowlands.[13]

4.1 (iv) The Bromyard Upland

In the district around Bromyard in the northeast of the county there is an upland area where most of the land reaches an altitude exceeding 500 feet above sea level. In some places this climbs to 800 feet. The region in carved up by a number of confined valleys, mainly associated with tributaries of the River Frome. The soil structure of the region is mainly made up of light loams of a reasonable quality in the valleys but much shallower in the higher districts.[14]

In geographical terms the region is closely associated with southeastern Shropshire and northeastern Worcestershire. Rowley has described how the River Teme demarks the Herefordshire boundary of this greater region.[15] In the early medieval period settlement

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[12] M. Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages,* (Leicester, 1992), p. 5.

[13] Atkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[15] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

was probably much more restricted here than in the other eastern regions although this may have increased as the overall population of the county rose in the thirteenth century.

4.1(v) The Eastern Plain

This region is associated with the valley of the Frome and the upper Leadon basin. It represents an eastern extension of the Central Plain towards the impressive natural boundary of the Malvern Hills on the old border with Worcestershire. In the valleys a red marl based heavy loam soil is most common, whereas in the district of the Malverns, the oldest rocks visible in Herefordshire, there are much more varied soil types apparent.[16]

Rowley has pointed out that the limits of cultivation and settlement have tended to be influenced by the line of the water table that appears, as a regular line, at about 600 feet.[17] Atkin has claimed that this district was the most prosperous agricultural region in Herefordshire at the time of the Domesday survey, a situation that perhaps continued into the later Middle Ages.[18] The population was high in this region in medieval times, the exception being on the slopes of the Malvern Hills that were only suitable for rough grazing or for the production of wood.

4.1 (vi) The Woolhope Region ('W' on the map)

This region is small but very distinctive. Its landscape is dominated by a curious Silurian outcrop, known as the Woolhope Dome, which is characterized with a series of

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[17] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[18] Atkin, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

intermittent scarps and valleys. Rowley has said that heavy clays are the dominant soils in the valleys and has contrasted them with the thin limestone soils characteristic of the higher land of the district.[19] The area seems to have attracted quite high levels of settlement in the early medieval period.[20]

4.1 (vii) Archenfield

This region, which extends from the Forest of Dean in the south and east to the River Monnow in the west, has a mixed relief. On the River Wye there is land that is less than 100 feet above sea level. This climbs to over 600 feet in the district above the River Monnow and up to 1200 feet on Garway Hill.[21] The soils of the region are light and sandy and therefore easy to work. Tributaries of the River Wye drain the region in the southeast. The region was also part of the Ryelands, a wider district encapsulating the Ross Region, which was to develop into a very important area for arable farming.

Archenfield, in its modern sense, is an area enclosed by the Rivers Wye, Monnow and Worm. There is strong evidence to suggest that originally the region included land to the east of the Wye and constituted the ancient Welsh kingdom of Ergyng. It is likely that the Roman town of Ariconium (from which the word Ergyng derives) was at the centre of this kingdom and represented the hub of a district bounded by the River Wye in the west and the Rivers Leadon and Severn in the east.[22] Gelling has suggested that Ergyng came

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[19] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[20] Atkin, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[22] Gelling, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

under English control in the eighth or ninth centuries, possibly during the reign of Offa of Mercia *c.* 760. She believes that the eastern part of the old kingdom was subject to dense English colonization in the Anglo-Saxon period.[23]

The development of this district followed a different path from the rest of southeastern Herefordshire in the early medieval period because even at the time of Domesday Book, Archenfield was considered to be a Welsh district with some degree of autonomy.[24] This ensured a cultural and historical diversity that has influenced the progress of this region. Much of the area was laid waste by the Welsh king Gruffudd ap Llywelyn during his campaign of 1055 which culminated in the destruction of Hereford itself. It seems that this area took a long time to recover from this devastation and it is possible that it faced further wasting shortly after Norman Conquest.[25] This situation, combined with a continuing cultural diversity, helps explain the distinctive character of the region. The main question is for how long did this cultural influence affect the course of development in this area.

4.1(viii) The Ross Region

This region has traditionally been associated with successful arable farming with light and sandy soils that are easy to work. It is the part of the Ryelands that lay outside Archenfield.[26] As has been suggested above, despite being geographically and historically

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[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 114-116.

[24] Atkin, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

[25] T. M. Davies, *Gruffudd ap Llywelyn: an eleventh-century king* (unpublished MA thesis, University of Wales, 1994), pp. 41-49.

[26] J. P. Dodd, 'Herefordshire Agriculture in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *The Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club,* vol. XLIII, (1980), pp. 211.

associated with Archenfield, the regions followed a different pattern of progress in the early Middle Ages and it is possible that this district became the main focus of the Ryelands prior to a later amalgamation.

4.1(ix) The Upland of Ewias

The social and economic landscape of this region, which lies between the Golden Valley and the Black Mountains, is characterized by the five parallel valleys that split up the district. The valleys of the Olchon, Escley Brook, the Upper Monnow, Dulas and Dore dissect the Upper Old Red Sandstone hills that range between 600 and 1000 feet. The soil type is primarily red marl intermingled with tracts of drift.[27]

Ewias is an ancient Welsh territorial name. It is likely that most of the district was still under Welsh control in the eleventh century. Atkin has stated that it would be interesting to discover to what extent Welsh custom survived in the region throughout the medieval period.[28] It seems likely that a pastoral economy was the dominant feature of this region throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern era. Dodd has shown how in 1623 the whole of Ewyas Lacy was "more in dairies than in tillage" and in the 1850s he maintains that 62% of the region was covered by permanent grass and rough grazing, proving that pastoral conditions were still the dominant feature.[29]

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[27] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[28] Atkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

[29] Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

4.1(x) Other Regional Details

Dodd has recognized five larger regions within Herefordshire (see map H3).[30] They are worth noting here because they coincide more clearly with his analysis of nineteenth-century land-use patterns that will be mentioned later in this chapter. In Dodd's map the Central Plain includes the western border district and comprises the greater part of Herefordshire. He has established that this region has Lower Old Red Sandstone as its base with a cover of Boulder Clay deposited by the glacier that originally formed the Wye Valley. Dodd has noted that this ground moraine extends as far east as Orleton and Stoke Lacy, and to Hereford in the south.[31]

The Silurian Scarplands are made up of older rocks: Wenlock, Ludlow and Aymestry Limestones and Shales that create an edge that climbs to an altitude of 1284 feet at Kington. The rim continues through the Old Red Sandstone area of the Black Mountains that rise to 2300 feet along Breconshire border. In the south of the county the uplands of the Orcop area rise to 900 feet, further east the Upper Old Red Sandstone at Penyard is 200 feet lower. In the east Dodd has noted that the encompassing highland rim continues through the Cambrian and Pre-Cambrian rocks that make up the Malvern Hills. To the northeast of the Central Plain there is a marginal district between Leominster and Mathon that is developed on the Old Red Sandstone uplands and ranges between about 700 and 800 feet.[32]

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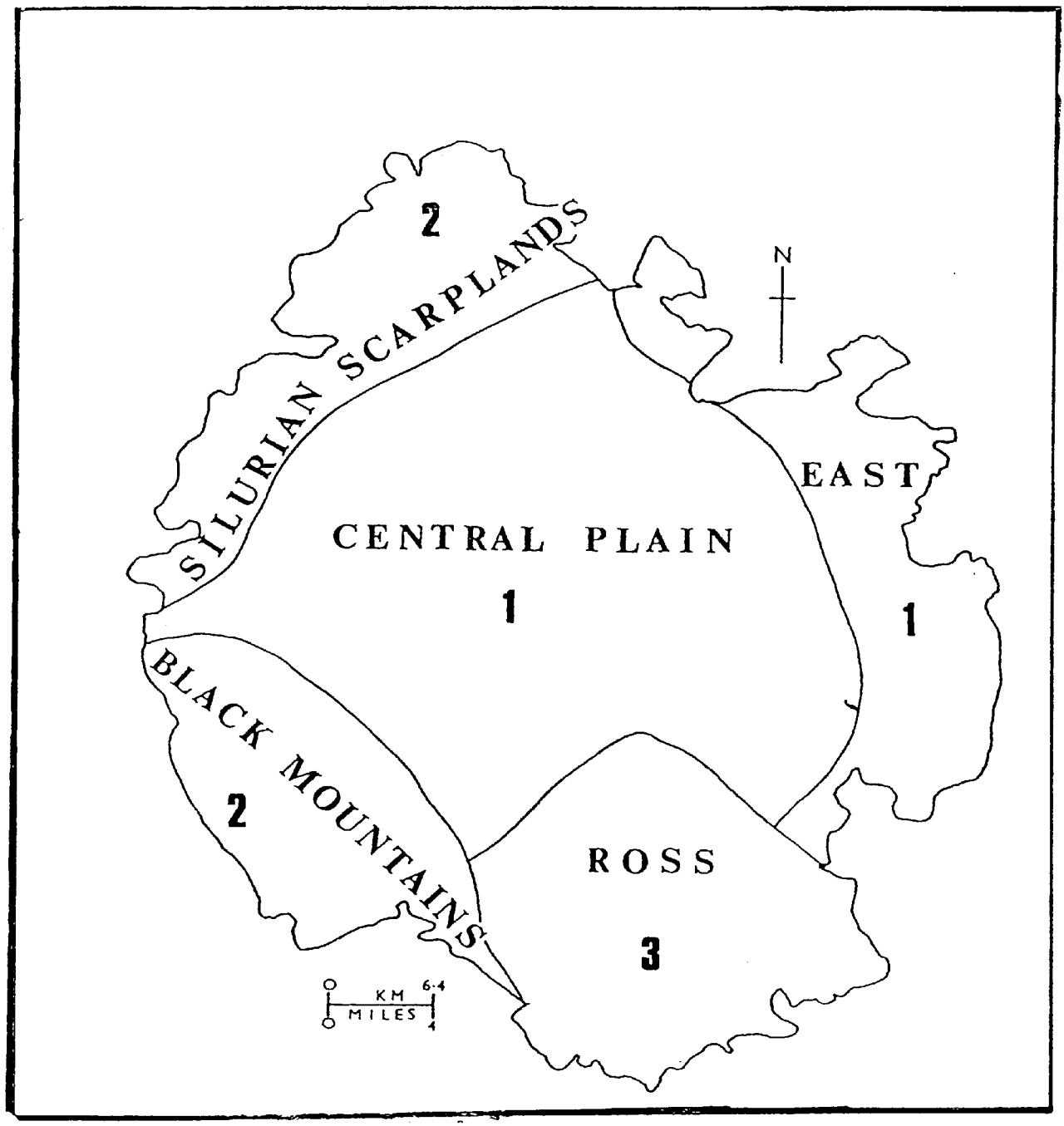
[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 207-17.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 205-206

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 206.

H3: Herefordshire regions (after Dodd.)



Dodd has stated that rainfall in Herefordshire is heaviest on the Black Mountains with some 50-60 inches per annum. He has noted that there is gradually less rainfall the further east you go. The western and southern borders receive 30-35 inches and the Central Plain is drier with an average of 27.5 inches. The slightly higher upland district between Leominster and Mathon receives some 30 inches per annum. On the Central Plain and in the East Herefordshire Region Dodd's analysis of the 1801 crop returns indicate a "virtual monoculture" of wheat.[33] In the Black Mountains and on the Silurian Scarplands he noted reasonably equal amounts of wheat and oats with barley a poor third. Amounts of wheat and barley were more or less equivalent in the Ross region.[34]

4.2 Agriculture and settlement

Herefordshire was once part of the great Saxon kingdom of Mercia. King Offa (757-796) established Mercia as the predominant kingdom in England. The bishopric of Hereford was founded in the seventh century. It became one of principal towns of Mercia and an important Saxon burgh. Offa erected a huge earthwork to demark the western limits of his kingdom against Wales. Offa's Dyke enters Herefordshire, in the north, near Knill, and then moves southeast past Lyonshall, Weobley and Mansell Gamage, joining the River Wye near Bridge Sollers. From here, the river defines the boundary, along with some earthworks on crags to the east of the river.[35] By the time of the Domesday Survey many areas west of the boundary set by Offa were considered to be part of Herefordshire,

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 207.

[35] *Domesday Book, Herefordshire,* ed. Frank and Caroline Thorn, (Chichester, 1983), introductory notes, 1.

although the areas of Ewias and Archenfield retained strong cultural links with Wales. These areas were recognized by contemporaries as anomalous. Their customs were listed separately in *Domesday Book* and dues were paid according to Welsh custom. They remained ecclesiastically part of Wales until 1130 in the case of Archenfield and 1852 in the case of Ewias. Gelling has emphasized the prominence of Welsh place-names in Herefordshire and has concluded that large areas of the county "must have been wholly or partly Welsh-speaking up to and beyond the Norman Conquest".[36] She claims that in the "greater part of Herefordshire, Welsh speech cannot have been exceptional".[37] The western border of Herefordshire remained fluid throughout the medieval period. A greater degree of stability did occur following the Edwardian Conquest of Wales, but it was not until the Tudor legislation of 1536-43 that the modern boundary was set.[38] The shires that made up Mercia were established in the early eleventh century. Herefordshire is first mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 1048. However, even in 1086 the county boundary remained unclear at some points, the border between Herefordshire and Gloucestershire had not been firmly established and there were grey areas to the northwest where the county joins Shropshire and in the east on the Worcestershire boundary.[39]

Following the Norman Conquest the opportunity and incentive for colonization of the shires that bordered Wales was great. In Herefordshire the assarting movement, whereby woodland and waste were turned over to arable use, was particularly strong. It

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[36] Gelling, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[38] R. R. Davies, *The Age of Conquest. Wales 1063-1415,* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 6-7; Glanville R. J. Jones, 'The Portrayal of Land Settlement in Domesday Book', *Domesday Studies,* ed. J. C. Holt, (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 191-196.

[39] *Domesday Book, Herefordshire, op. cit.,* introductory notes, 4

appears that large-scale woodland clearances had occurred prior to 1066.[40] The Domesday evidence suggests that there was much less woodland in Herefordshire than in Shropshire and Gloucestershire. This has been taken to mean that extensive clearance had taken place since Saxon times. More recently Gelling has studied the occurrence of place-names with the element *lēah* in the West Midlands.[41] This term is considered to be indicative of districts which were originally wooded.[42] Her research has led her to claim that the Domesday evidence "may be consistent with a much earlier situation."[43] The relatively low percentage of place-names recognized, by Jack, as evidence of new colonization during the period 1087-1350 may also be indicative of an earlier process of settlement.[44]

The valleys of the Wye, Lugg and Frome provided rich arable and pasture and there is more evidence of the working of a common-field system in medieval Herefordshire than in Cheshire and Shropshire. Evidence of assarting helps plot the course of new settlement in Herefordshire. The county is unique in being the only county in which assarts are recorded in Domesday Book: at Marcle in the Woolhope region, at Weobley and Leominster Manor, on the Central Plain, and at Fernhill. References to settlers at Hope on the Central Plain, Lyonshall on the edge of the North-West Uplands and Letton,

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[40] R. I. Jack, 'Farming Techniques: Wales and the Marches', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. II, *1042-1350,* ed. H. E. Hallam, (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 414-15;

[41] Gelling, *op. cit.,* pp. 6-19, esp. pp. 16-19.

[42] *Ibid.,* p.16; H. S. A. Fox, 'The People of the Wolds in English Settlement History', *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England,* ed. M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer, (Oxford, 1989), p. 84; D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England,* (Leicester, 1998), p. 145. See also Chapter 6, section 6.6(i) below.

[43] Gelling, *op. cit.,* pp. 16-19.

[44] Jack, 'New Settlement, Wales and the Marches, in Hallam, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. II, *op. cit.,* p. 263.

on the Western border have also been taken to suggest the assarting of waste land at this time.[45]

The Domesday folios note large tracts of waste in Herefordshire, predominantly in the western regions. The greater part of the land in Hazeltree and Elsdon Hundreds and in the Golden Valley is recorded as waste or partially waste before 1066, along with some lands on the north and east boundaries of Archenfield and in the northeast of the county. The Welsh king Gruffudd ap Llywelyn had devastated the region in 1055 when he sacked Hereford. Throughout his reign (1039-1063) he followed a policy of aggressive expansionism that included frequent raids into England. He was the only Welsh leader to assert his power over all the Welsh kingdoms and seems to have made attempts at asserting his influence in the marginal border areas. In 1055 he killed his rival, Gruffudd ap Rhydderch, who ruled over southeast Wales. He then made progress through Gruffudd ap Rhydderch's territory and into Archenfield, before attacking Hereford itself. Memories of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's devastation of Herefordshire lived on in the region for many centuries and it appears that the wasting was extensive and had long lasting effects on the landscape.[46] The large areas of waste may have provided impetus for the assarting movement, as waste areas could be turned over to arable production.

By the thirteenth century assarting was widespread in Herefordshire; between 1195 and 1199 there were assarts at Bodenham, on the River Lugg and in 1223 the monks of Brecon were engaged in assarting at Brinsop, north of the Wye (both areas lie in the Central Plain). The Knights Hospitaller were conducting a large-scale operation at Garway

[45] H. E. Hallam, 'Rural England and Wales, 1042-1350: Population and Landholding, Wales and the Marches', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 1001.

[46] Davies, *Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, op. cit.*, pp. 41-47.

(Archenfield) involving the assarting of some 2000 acres of open waste.[47] By this time woodland clearances were leading to the indiscriminate obliteration of ancient woodlands such as Treville Forest. This area consisted of some 2000 acres between Kilpeck and Abbey Dore, on the slopes overlooking the Golden Valley. By 1213 most of this land was being cleared in one way or another. It seems that in the context of the border counties this type of assarting on an enormous scale was fairly unique to the hills of Herefordshire although Jack has noted a similar pattern on Cistercian sites in Glamorgan.[48] Jack has also noted evidence of smaller scale assarts in Herefordshire, at Hope Wood, Hope Mansel and Aconbury.[49] He claims that "the process which made the border counties major centres for new settlement in the thirteenth century continued in one form or another both there and in Wales proper through much of the following century."[50] Even by the thirteenth century, the characteristic assart in Herefordshire was "a small extension to the existing fields."[51] The amount of Royal Forest in Herefordshire was considerably less than in neighbouring Shropshire and consisted of a section of the Forest of Dean along with a region to the north and west of Hereford which was eventually broken up into three chases - Mocktree, Deerfold and Bringewood.[52]

Jack has claimed that some of the richest areas of open plain in medieval Herefordshire was not used for arable cultivation but rather for cattle rearing, with the "Welsh" districts of Archenfield and Ewias supporting sheep. He has suggested that the

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[47] Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 268-269.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 271.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[52] Hallam, *op. cit.*, p. 1001; Jack, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-15.; Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

absence of large grain markets in the region may have inhibited large-scale wheat farming in the arable districts of the county. He says that in the west of the county the principal crop grown was oats for animal feed due to the poor soil quality. He claims that the principal farming areas of the county tended to be the ecclesiastical estates that were primarily in the east of the county.[53] Owen has claimed that the "Celtic System" of arable farming, involving "small open arable fields surrounded by extensive areas of pastureland" was apparent in some of the border districts as well as in Wales itself but that the "closest approximations in the borderlands" to the three-field system, characteristic of Midland England, were to be found in parts of Herefordshire and Shropshire.[54]

In the centuries following 1086 Herefordshire became a prosperous county with thriving villages and towns such as Ross, Bromyard and Ledbury and was, according to Hallam, the most prosperous of the Marcher counties.[55] Jack has claimed that a more stable relationship with Wales in the twelfth and earlier thirteenth centuries encouraged the spread of settlement on the Herefordshire Plain and in the west of the county.[56] Hallam has noted that the greatest population growth in England in the centuries after Domesday Book occurred in the "highland zone" and estimates that Herefordshire saw a five times growth in population in the two centuries after 1086.[57] One of the reasons for the prosperity of the county in this period was the wool industry. This became particularly

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[53] Jack,, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-15.

[54] D. H. Owen, 'Farming Techniques: Wales and the Marches, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. III, 1348-1500, ed. E. Miller, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 245-47.

[55] Hallam, *op. cit.*, pp. 998-99.

[56] Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

[57] Hallam, 'Population Movements', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.*, pp. 510-511.

important during times of agricultural decline in the later Middle Ages. Rowley has said that the prosperity of the county is suggested by Hereford's ability to lend the king £100 in 1399, a loan that resulted in the granting of an important new charter to the city.[58] The growth of the English cloth industry in the later Middle Ages led to a demand for high quality wool in the manufacturing districts of the West Country. Although there were some local cloth-making centres in Herefordshire, most of the wool from the county was sent elsewhere for processing. Herefordshire wool was generally considered to be of the highest quality in this period and could command very high prices.[59]

Owen has stated that the topography, soil and climate of the shires situated on the border with Wales made them particularly suitable for "pastoral agrarian activities."[60] However, in the earlier Middle Ages arable production was very important in Herefordshire and even extended into marginal regions. The upheavals of the fourteenth century probably encouraged a greater degree of mixed farming which, according to Owen, was "widely practiced."[61] He claims that the "close relationship between the two agrarian processes is illustrated by the premium placed on meadowlands by both arable and pastoral farmer."[62]

The fertility of Herefordshire in the post-medieval period was commented upon by a number of contemporary writers. In 1585 William Camden described it as "fruitful for corn and cattle feeding".[63] In 1657 Dr. John Beale had some detailed comments about land

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[58] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

[59] Owen, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

[63] Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

use, and noted a number of sub-regions. He saw "shallow and starvy land . . . about Lemster and towards Keinton and towards Fayremile". He reflected on the cold air near Bromyard and its shallow, barren soil. He said that all over Archenfield there was "a shallow, hot sandy or stony rye-land" which he said was vulnerable to the unpredictable air from the Black Mountains. He said that comparable circumstances prevailed near Weobley and Hay. Beale said that the finest wheat was cultivated on the stiff clay lands of the Plain of Hereford and remarks that it was far "richer" on the ground than even the wheat he had observed in the "fair Vale" of Evesham. At Clehonger near Hereford and in some parts of Archenfield, he claimed that the rye was as good as the maslin of many other counties.[64] Beale also mentioned grasslands. He believed that the valley of the Frome was the richest in the county and had the finest grassland. He said the grasses in the Ross area were coarser and of a poorer species. Most of the river grassland was in danger of heavy flooding in winter, making it relatively unproductive for much of the year. This problem was still apparent two hundred years after Beale was writing. The Herefordshire farmer, Henry Higgens, writing in the mid nineteenth century, claimed that much of the county needed draining even then.[65]

In the early eighteenth century Daniel Defoe commented on the productivity of Herefordshire:

> "One would hardly expect so pleasant and fruitful a county as this, so near the barren mountains of Wales not any of our southern counties, the neighbourhood of London excepted, comes up to the fertility of this county".[66]

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[64] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.

[66] D. Defoe, *A Tour through England and Wales* (1724), Everyman edition (1928), pp. 49-50.

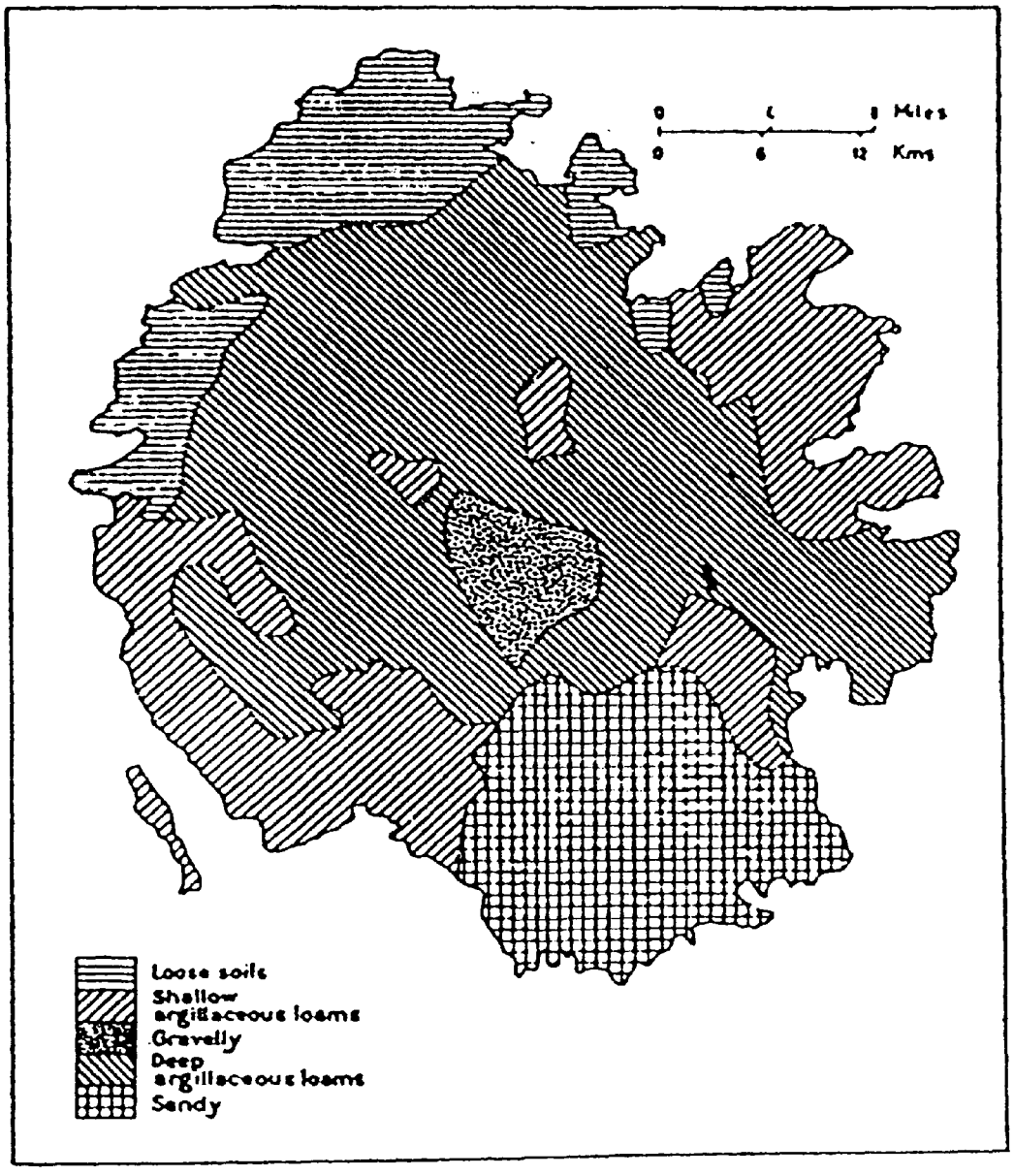
He considered the Hundred of Wigmore to be "fruitful and pleasant". At Bramton Bryan and Wigmore Castle he said that "the parks are still very fine and full of large timber". Defoe recognized the quality of the wheat fields near Leominster. He was most impressed by the status Herefordshire held for the best quality wool, and described it as "the finest without exception" in the whole of England. The districts he held in most regard for the production of this product were the Hundred of Wigmore, the Leominster district and the Golden Valley. He commented on the richness of the pastures on the banks of the River Dore but was aware of the propensity towards flooding throughout the county.[67]

In 1805, John Duncumb produced a soil map of Herefordshire which accords well with modern views of land use regions (see map H4). The map shows the Plain of Hereford composed of "deep argillaceous loams", "the sandy region" in the southeast, and zones of "shallow, argillaceous loams" to the southwest and northwest of the Central Plain, with a belt of "loose soils" in the northwest.[68] Dodd has analysed the Crop Returns of 1801 for Herefordshire and although the statistics did not allow him to gauge the extent of arable acreage, he was able to show the principal cereal in the various regions of the county. He also used the Tithe Surveys of the 1840s, along with statistics collected from the Poor Law Unions and the evidence supplied for the Poor Law Act to group together an assorted data set that has allowed him to carry out a survey of land use for his regions

[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

[68] J. Duncumb, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hereford* (1805), frontispiece; Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

H4: Herefordshire soils (after Duncumb.)



of Herefordshire (see map H3 above). The following is a summary of his findings per 1000 acres of land in each region:[69]

Table H1: Land-use in the mid-nineteenth century (after Dodd).

Region	Arable	Permanent Grass	Rough Grazing	Wood
Silurian Scarplands	332	485	107	73
Black Mountains	324	517	102	54
Ross Region	538	308		136
Central Plain	424	499	5	67
East Herefordshire	496	387	30	87
Totals	**2114**	**2196**	**244**	**417**

Dodd decided that despite regional differences in the character of the economy in the upland regions compared with the principal regions of the Central Plain, "there were a number of common aspects of farming in the first half of the nineteenth century". The main trait he was able to recognize was the role of Herefordshire as a great wheat-growing county. Another important aspect was the "duality of the agricultural economy", which was dedicated to arable farming but had a considerable interest in livestock on a countrywide basis. Wool was also found to be a valuable commodity in every region.[70]

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 207-17.

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 207-17.

Phillips has also used the Tithe Surveys to examine land use in nineteenth century Herefordshire.[71] He was able to assess the allocation of cultivated land, arable, meadow and pasture, woodland, commons and waste. He found that the amount of cultivated land in Herefordshire was high and that 88% of the titheable area was cultivated. He discovered that the regions with less than 80% of their land cultivated were in the far south, in the west and in a band in the north running from Clifford to Richard's Castle. He noted that at the time of the survey these were areas where woodland, common and waste had more worth than elsewhere in the county. Waste and common covered 3% of the tithe area and were predominantly located in the west of the county. Herefordshire still retained a substantial amount of woodland in 1840, accounting for 8% (36,200 acres) of the tithe area. Above average amounts of woodland were noted in the north, in parts of the west and in the south and southeast of the county.[72] Arable accounted for 195,000 acres or 42% of the total recorded area. It achieved its utmost dominance in the south, attaining over 60% in places. Its significance declined to the north, although there were large parts in the middle of the county where it ranged between 40 and 59% of the recorded area. By 1840, meadow and pasture had become the dominant land use in Herefordshire, representing 215,600 acres or 46% of the tithe area.[73] Overall, Phillips noted that by 1840 only the "light land" district in the south was still dominated by arable farming. In the other parts of the county where arable had once been of great consequence, its significance had declined. In the east, grassland had become as prevalent as arable, while

[71] A. D. M. Phillips, 'Agricultural land use and the Herefordshire tithe surveys', *The Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club* XLIII (1979), pp. 54-61.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

the central clay land along with the northern parts of the county had greater acreages of grassland than had formerly been the case.[74]

In summary, following a period of colonization and an intensive assarting programme, that reached its peak in the thirteenth century, our knowledge of land-use patterns in Herefordshire is very limited until the early modern period. For example, there is much to be learned about the effects of the famine of 1315-18 and of the Black Death on the agriculture of the region. The county emerges from the medieval period as a very prosperous and fertile one. Despite its many upland areas it enjoyed a strong role as a wheat growing county with wool production as an important subsidiary. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that pasture and meadow took over in importance as the dominant land use. Feet of fines provide a very important data set for the period 1199-1507. They can be used to examine more subtle and widespread trends. One avenue of research will be to examine the question of whether arable maintained its dominance over other land types in the later medieval period. Another will be an analysis of the period of the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century to see whether there are fluctuations in the amount of land transferred in fines at that time.

4.3 Problems associated with agriculture and settlement in Herefordshire and possible uses of feet of fines.

The most obvious overall problem is the lack of a countywide survey comparable with *Domesday Book* for the rest of the medieval period. The survey itself has inadequate records for some regions. Later surveys tend to be local in nature (a situation reflected in

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

the secondary sources). If the feet of fines for Herefordshire are fairly countywide in their distribution, they will be an invaluable source in helping to reconstruct Herefordshire's medieval land use. Of particular interest will be a comparative study of traditionally arable regions with the pastoral districts, particularly when the influence of cultural, along with physical differences, are considered.

Problems associated with the identification of Herefordshire place-names mean that it can be difficult to plot areas of new settlement within the county. The editors of the Philimore edition of Domesday Book, Herefordshire, have highlighted this problem.[75] They note the lack of an *English Place-Name Society* volume for Herefordshire, the lack of further volumes of the *Victoria County History,* the failings of Bannister's study of Herefordshire place-names and the problems inherent in Lord Rennell of Rodd's work on the subject. They have attempted to alleviate this situation with their own list of problematic Domesday place-names. They also point out the value of the unique, late twelfth century, transcript of *Domesday Book, Herefordshire* (Balliol MS. 350) that contains the names of the then landholders in the margins of the text.[76] More recently, the research of Bruce Coplestone-Crow has led to advancements in this subject.[77] Feet of fines are a very valuable source for place-name identification because they contain the place-names along with personal names and the date. There were some minor problems with place-name identification in the Herefordshire fines (see table H3). For example, it is not clear whether the fourth part of one virgate of arable in Brampton obtained by the two

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[75] *Domesday Book, Herefordshire, op. cit.,* introductory notes, 6.

[76] *Herefordshire Domesday,* ed. V. H. Galbraith and J. Tait, Pipe Roll Society LXIII (new series XXV London, 1950).

[77] B. Coplestone-Crow, *Herefordshire Place-Names,* (Oxford, 1989).

daughters of Waldo Wudappel (Gunhilda and Matilda) from John Walense in 1220, is Great Brampton, Little Brampton, Brampton Abbots or Brampton Bryan.[78] It is clear, however, that the Brampton mentioned in conjunction with the transfer of two messuages, 100 acres of arable, ten acres of meadow and ten acres of pasture from Alice, the wife of Bartholomew Daundesey, to her son, Thomas Daundesey, in 1448 is Brampton in Madley. This is indicated because the document also mentions Madley and the adjacent parish of Kingstone.[79] Overall it has been possible to identify 87% of the land mentioned in the Herefordshire fines.

The decision to digitize parish boundaries rather than hundredal boundaries, as a means of displaying the data from the source material, has enabled an accurate depiction of patterns of settlement and land-use in Herefordshire at a very localized level. The maps help reveal the extent of settlement of the population who used this method of conveyance and show the types of land and property that were mentioned most in particular areas. Map H5 shows the parishes of Herefordshire as used in the digitized maps. Regional maps have also been produced to enable relative percentage values to be considered along with distribution patterns.

One intriguing problem relating to the settlement history of Herefordshire is that some of its regions also had a distinct cultural history in that they were ostensibly Welsh districts. Even today, more than half the farm and field names in Archenfield are Welsh. Rowley has warned of the complexities surrounding the place-name geography of the Herefordshire border and Jack has noted the complexities relating to the social structure

[78] PRO: CP25/1/80/3/25A.

[79] PRO: CP25/1/83/56/67.

of the area claiming that the "Welsh custom of landholding by *gwely* or by *gafael* existed alongside free and customary tenure and tenure at will."[80] Jack also traces the rise, in the fourteenth century, of the "Welsh mortagage" which enabled the alienation of hereditary land by a grant which could be renewed, initially after a four-year period. It is possible that Welsh people living in the border regions used this system.[81] The fluid nature of the border throughout the centuries has led to continued changes in settlement patterns and place-names. It will be useful to examine the Welsh personal names, which sometimes appear in the Herefordshire fines. For example, in 1357 John ap Howell, represented in Westminster by his attorney Richard de Welnesford, obtained a messuage and a carucate of arable in Pembridge, from a clerk, Jacob de Wottenhill.[82] It will be possible to plot their location and to discover whether these people were using an English method of conveyance in traditionally Welsh districts of the county or whether they represented people of Welsh origin who had become integrated into Herefordshire society. Any information relating to the Welsh districts would be particularly valuable because of the lack of documentary sources for this period.

Much of the evidence for land use in medieval Herefordshire comes from thirteenth century surveys of ecclesiastical estates. These were primarily in the eastern part of the county and there is a need for a much more widespread picture. Similarly, the pioneering work of Lord Rennell of Rodd on the field systems of the Hindwell Valley of Herefordshire's northwestern border is limited to that region and lacks documentary

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[80] Jack, 'Social Structure, Wales and the Marches, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.*, p. 699.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 699.

[82] PRO: CP25/1/83/44/176.

evidence. This makes the processes he describes difficult to date.[83] As can be seen from maps such as H6 the land mentioned in the Herefordshire fines is distributed throughout the various regions of the county and therefore provides an extremely valuable source in plotting land use in Herefordshire from the thirteenth to the early sixteenth centuries.

Atkin has expressed surprise at the lack of meadow recorded in the Domesday Survey of Herefordshire. Despite the well-watered nature of the countryside, only about one in six villages are recorded as containing meadow. The meadow recorded in the survey is almost exclusively in the centre and east of the county, particularly in the Lugg and Frome valleys near their confluence. There was no meadow recorded in the very large manor of Leominster and it was notably lacking in Archenfield, the Golden Valley, and northwestern Herefordshire and in the Bromyard region. The fines contain more widespread information about meadow and pasture. The data can be compared with the Domesday evidence and that for the early modern period to look for trends in land use over time.[84] It will be interesting to see whether the evidence suggests pastoralism in the Welsh districts and whether the situation changed over time. As mentioned earlier, the assarting movement was particularly strong in Hereford. The analysis of fines containing information about woodland will be of interest to see whether the process continued throughout the medieval period. It seems clear that during the first fifty years of the nineteenth century meadow and pasture took over from arable as the dominant land type

[83] Lord Renell of Rodd, *Valley on the March, a History of a Group of Manors on the Herefordshire March of Wales,* (London, 1958); Jack, 'Farming Techniques: Wales and the Marches', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.*, p. 417.

[84] Atkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-1.

in Herefordshire. The data from the fines can be used to show subtler changes throughout the medieval period, indicating how individual regions developed.

4.4 Herefordshire feet of fines: Statistics and analysis

Domesday statistics suggest that Herefordshire was a county split between a relatively prosperous arable region encompassing the centre and eastern border of the county, and a poorly surveyed, largely devastated region to the west and south of the county. This second area was made up of marginal, hilly land in the west and low-lying, potentially good arable land in the south. The two areas were also split culturally, with a strong Welsh influence in the second region. By the nineteenth century Herefordshire was a prosperous county with a variety of land-use types. The south had developed into an important arable region, meadow and pasture were as important as arable in the central and eastern regions. The western areas tended to be more suited to pastoralism. Feet of fines provide a long-term data source and an analysis of their statistics for Herefordshire will provide evidence to show how land-use in the various regions of the county changed over time. The Herefordshire feet of fines record a total of 100,494 acres. The major land types are displayed in table H2 (there are some unidentified land types which explains the slight discrepancy between the overall acreage mentioned above and that shown on the table below). The table shows land-type, the number of fines they occur in, the total acreage, the number of times each type is mentioned, the percentage of the total acreage transferred and the average acreage of each land-type, per mention and per fine.

Table H2: Herefordshire Feet Of Fines 1199-1507. Numbers and average sizes of transactions involving each type of land.

Land Type	Number of fines	Total acreage	Times mentioned	Percentage of total	Average acreage per mention	Average acreage per document
Arable	1035	85168	1638	85	52	82
Meadow	449	4106	809	4	5	9
Pasture	181	4203	347	4	12	25
Wood	211	3480	417	3.4	8.3	16
Land	11	3300	12	3.3	275	300
Moor	45	218	95	0.25	2.2	4.8
Totals		100475		100 %		

This table shows that about 90% of all transactions involved arable land, and 85% of the total area mentioned in the feet of fines was arable. Meadow, pasture and wood form the bulk of the remainder along with "land" which represents transfers of whole or part Knight's Fees - large parcels of land that would have included a variety of land-types. On average arable was conveyed in relatively large blocks whereas wood, meadow and pasture tended to be transferred in smaller parcels. The table is useful when compared with maps H6, H7, H8 and H9, which show the distribution of all land types, 1199-1507.

Of the 100,494 acres mentioned for the period 1199-1507 it has been possible to

identify the place-names, and therefore the parish, for 87,601 acres (87% of the total land mentioned). The following tables provide a breakdown of the unidentified acres of the major land types over time along with a percentage of the total identified for each date range:

Table H3: Unidentified acreage.

Land Type	1199-1250	1251-1302	1303-1352	1353-1404	1405-1455	1456-1507
Arable	3772.5	2618.5	1656	750.5	878	1303
Meadow	-----	22	45	59	41	169.5
Pasture	21	15	36		49	835
Wood	30	76	36	16.5	35	97.5
Land	600	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Moor	-----	-----	19	-----	-----	-----
Totals	**4423.5**	**2731.5**	**1792**	**826**	**1003**	**2405**

Table H4: Percentage of all land types identified.

1199-1250	1251-1302	1303-1352	1353-1404	1405-1455	1456-1507
72%	82%	95%	93.4%	92%	78%

Some fines mention more than one land type although this is relatively rare. Fines containing more than one land type tend, on average, to be slightly larger. Arable is mentioned in the vast majority of the fines involving land. It is very rare for a fine to mention any other type of land without recording arable. There are some exceptions, such as the six acres of meadow in Leominster transferred to Thomas Pourewayle, knight, Richard Proste, knight and Thomas Chambour from William Kyng in 1499.[85]

Table H5: Number of land types per fine.

Number of land types mentioned	Frequency	Average area of fine in acres
1	615	53
2	221	74
3	176	146
4	92	271
5	7	179

As noted in relation to table H4 above, fines containing more than one land type tend to be slightly larger on average. Most fines deal with land in a single parish.

[85] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/12.

Table H6: Average number of parishes per fine.

Number of parishes	Number of fines	Average acreage
1	876	68.89
2	159	138.6
3	51	186
4	15	227.38
5	3	577.4
6	4	294.5
7	2	645.8
10	1	1175.5

The average number of parishes mentioned in a single fine is 1.3. The fines involving several parishes appear to be among the larger ones. This is useful for the purposes of this study as it allows a quite accurate identification of land at parish level – if most of the fines had contained more than one parish name, then it would have been more difficult to estimate the breakdown of land throughout the various parishes.

Table H7: Distribution of sizes of transactions of selected types (number of fines).

Type	Number of fines	0	0-1	1-10	10-100	100-1000	1000+
Arable	1035	6	12	95	638	280	4
Meadow	449	1	79	272	92	4	0
Pasture	181	0	25	113	36	7	0
Wood	211	0	21	124	61	5	0
Land	11	5	0	0	0	6	0
Moor	45	0	9	31	5	0	0

At this precision it appears that meadow, pasture and wood were all transferred in similar size parcels that were much smaller than the arable parcels. A typical examples of this process is shown in a fine issued in 1312, whereby Nicholas de Folevile and Margeria, his wife, obtained a messuage, 60 acres of arable, six acres of meadow and four acres of moor in Kinnersley, from William de Folevile.[86] In order to analyse patterns, it is necessary to look at the transactions of all land types over time.

[86] PRO: CP25/1/82/30/65.

Table H8: Transaction averages of fines that mention land of all types.

Years	Number of fines that mention land	Average number per year	Average total acreage per fine	Average acreage transferred per year
1199-1250	257	5	45	222
1251-1302	252	4.9	61	302
1303-1352	340	6.8	107	734
1353-1404	140	2.7	90	246
1405-1455	97	1.9	128	243
1456-1507	38	0.7	296	216
Total	**1124**			

This table indicates that most fines date from the first half of the period, with a significant increase in the early fourteenth century. Maps H12, H17, H22 and H27 also highlight this situation. There follows an examination of the various land-types over time:

Table H9: Average area and number of fines that mention land.

	ARABLE		MEADOW		PASTURE		WOOD		TOTAL	
Years	**Fines**	**Average area**	**Fines**	**Average area**	**Fines**	**Average area**	**Fines**	**Average area**	**Fines**	**Average area**
1199-1250	198	44	1	1	10	5.2	1	30	257	45
1251-1302	237	61	57	4.1	12	22.5	24	21	252	61
1303-1352	334	98.6	189	6.75	71	5.3	101	14	340	109
1353-1404	134	85.7	91	8.2	25	4.5	32	9.6	140	90
1405-1455	96	111.6	76	12	33	17.6	33	8.5	97	128
1456-1507	38	180.4	34	26.6	28	98	19	48.4	38	296
Totals	**1037**		**448**		**179**		**210**		**1124**	

Table H10: Average area and number of fines that mention land (by century).

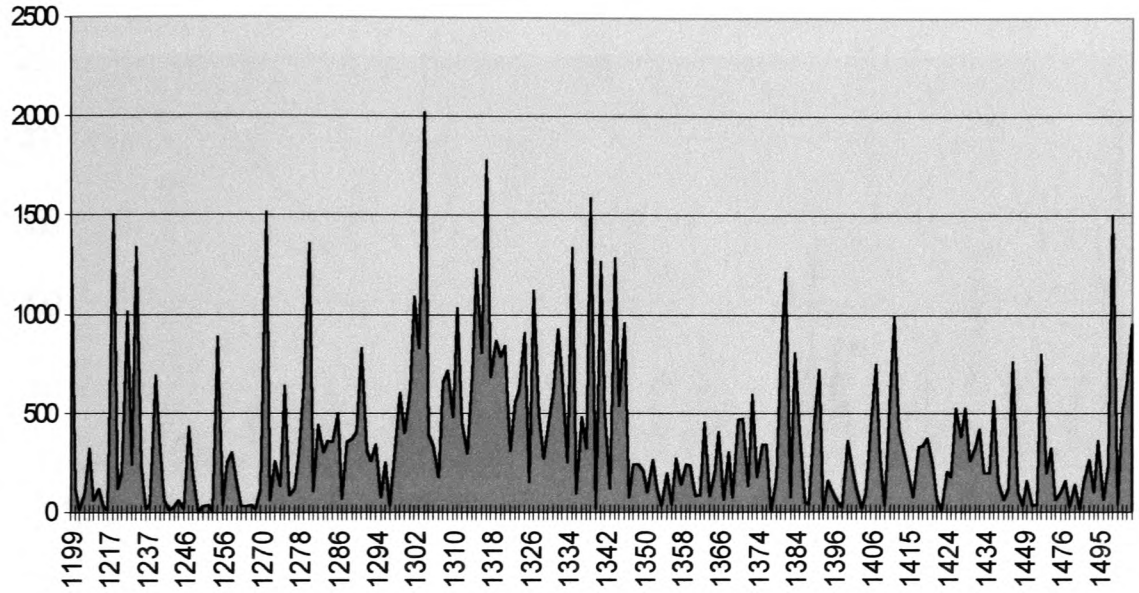
	ARABLE		MEADOW		PASTURE		WOOD		TOTAL	
Years	Fines	Average area	Fines	Average area	Fines	Average area	Fines	Average area	Fines	Average area
1199-1299	422	53	55	4	22	15	26	21	491	53
1300-1399	479	95	279	7.7	98	5	133	13	489	104
1400-1507	140	129	116	16	62	55	54	23	144	173
Totals	1037		448		179		210		1124	

Tables H9 and H10 show that the average size of arable transactions increased throughout the period. The leap in the average size of pasture towards the end of the period is caused by a series of large transfers at the end of the fifteenth and the start of the sixteenth centuries. For example, in 1500 Thomas Inglefeld, William Grevyll and David Morys, a clerk, obtained the manors of Killyngton and Humber along with 17 messuages, a garden, 1500 acres of arable, 200 acres of meadow, 1000 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood and 70/- rent in six parishes, from Hugh Vaughan and Elizabeth, his wife.[87] There is an interesting rise in the average acreage of pasture in the second half of the thirteenth

[87] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/16.

century. The following graphs show the area of the various land types over the whole period.

Graph H1: Arable acreage in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.

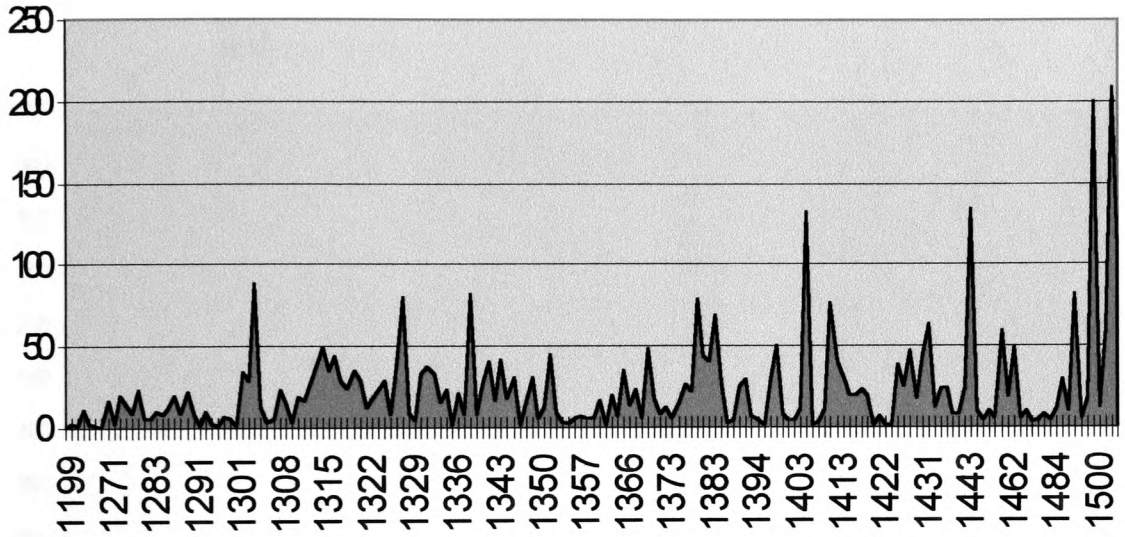


In 1199 Richard de Kaple obtained half an acre of meadow in Kings Caple from Thomas de Kaple.[88] This is the only mention of meadow in the Herefordshire series of fines until 1255 when half an acre in Ocle Pychard was transferred, along with a messuage and 40 acres of arable, from Gilbert, the abbot of Lyre, to William Andrew and Juliana, his wife, John de Languwain and Matilda, his wife and Gunnilda and Hawis, the daughters of

[88] PRO: CP25/1/80/1/18.

Edmund Brun de Lyre Ocle.[89] The following graph shows the area of meadow over the whole period.

Graph H2: Meadow acreage in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.



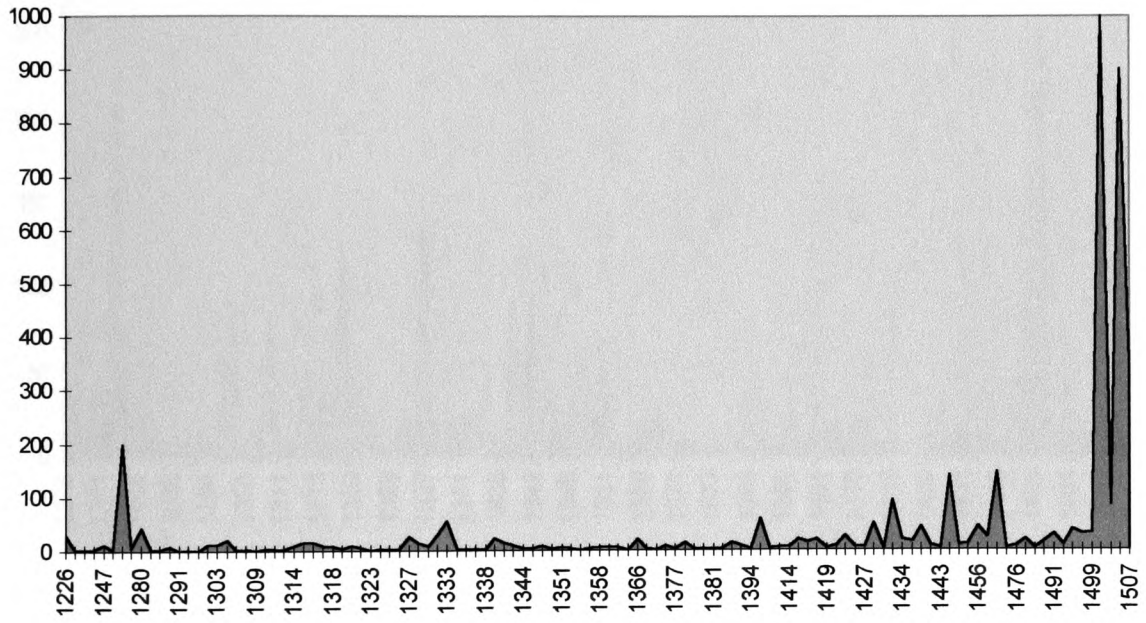
The first mention of pasture is for 1226 when Walter de Burkote and Hawisia, his wife, disposed of 15 acres along with ten acres of arable in Wisteston.[90] Graph H3 shows a sharp rise in the total amount of pasture in 1275. This is due to one particular transaction in Lyonshall, whereby William Waldebof, through his attorney Richard Belle, obtained 200 acres of pasture along with four carucates of arable, 20 acres of meadow, 200 acres of

[89] PRO: CP25/1/80/13/264.

[90] PRO: CP25/1/80/6/93.

wood, £24 11/- rent and the advowson of the church of Lyonshall, from Walter Devoreus.[91] The graph shows a sharp rise in the amount of pasture mentioned throughout the fifteenth century.

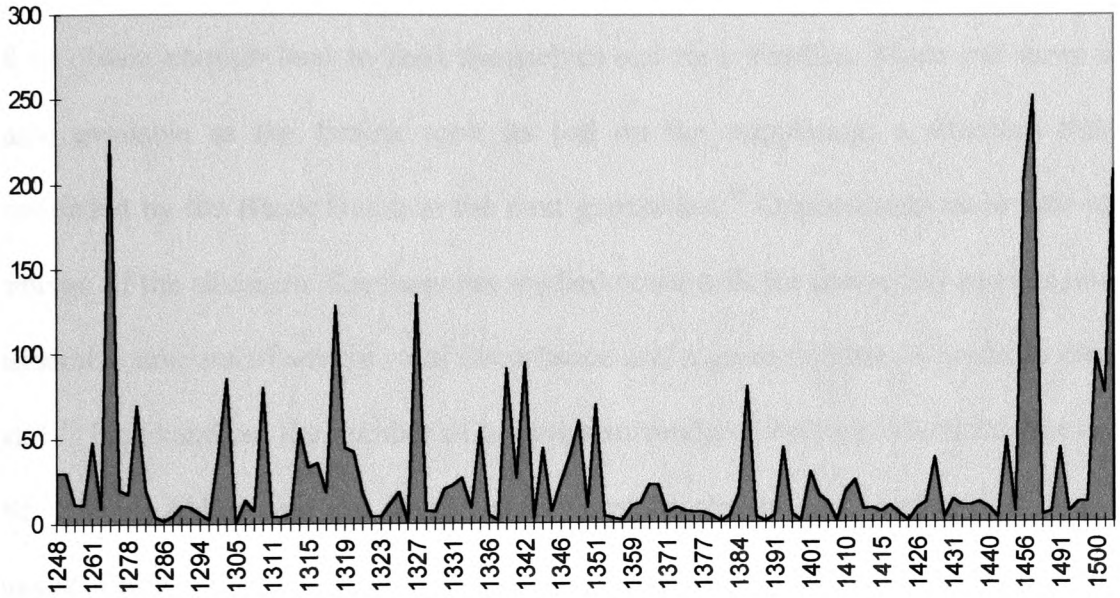
Graph H3: Pasture acreage in the feet of fines, 1226-1507.



[91] PRO: CP25/1/81/17/12.

The first record of wood occurred in 1248. Robert the prior of Hereford obtained 30 acres from Roger de Hereford.[92] The following graph plots the course of woodland transfers for the rest of the period.

Graph H4: Wood acreage recorded in the feet of fines, 1248-1507.



4.5 Herefordshire and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century.

There is a massive increase in the number of fines issued in the first half of the fourteenth century. This is indicative of a growth in the market for land, perhaps due to famine and poverty. The thirteenth century is generally considered to have been a relatively stable one with long periods between years of famine or bad harvests. In

[92] PRO: CP25/1/12/228.

contrast, the early fourteenth century was punctuated by frequent deficient harvests and poor weather. Prices in this period rose sharply due to the combined effects of population growth and climatic change.[93] Between 1315 and 1318 England experienced the worst famine in its recorded history. It was the result of a series of exceptionally bad harvests coupled with extremely wet weather. This led to a sharp increase in the price of grain. There was a tremendous expansion in the land market as people with larger holdings sold off land in an attempt to raise money to buy corn; people with little or no land of their own tried to obtain enough land to feed themselves and their families. More and more arable became available as the famine took its toll on the population, a situation that was compounded by the Black Death in the next generation.[94] Opportunists were able to take advantage of the situation. Kershaw has studied court rolls for the period and has noted "a considerable amount of severe rural disturbance and a good number of holdings changing hands".[95] He examined the number of holdings surrendered on three Hertfordshire manors of St. Albans Abbey and the large Cambridgeshire manor of Chesterton, belonging to Barnwell Priory. The resulting table clearly showed high figures for the amount of surrenders, with the years 1315-17 and 1321-2, standing out sharply as "a veiled reflection of the disturbed state of rural society during the agrarian crisis".[96] Owen has noted evidence of problems in Herefordshire at this time, such as the probable abandonment of the village of Hampton Wafer. He claims that poverty and turbulent conditions were

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[93] C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later Middle Ages: Social change in England c. 1200-1520,* (Revised edition, Cambridge, 1998), pp. 265-66.

[94] J. A. Kissock, 'Farms, Fields and Hedges: Aspects of the Rural Economy of North-East Gower, c. 1300 to c. 1650', *Archaeologia Cambrensis,* CXL (1991), p. 143.

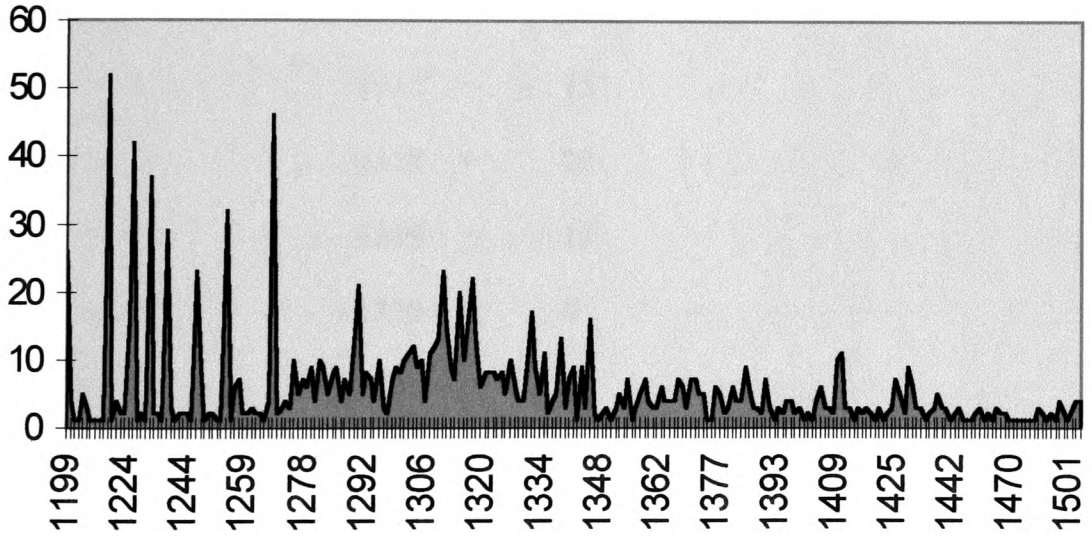
[95] I. Kershaw, 'The Great Famine and Agrarian Crisis in England 1315-1322, *Past and Present,* 59 (1973), p. 37.

[96] *Ibid.,* p. 38.

undoubtedly responsible for the decay of market villages such as Clifford, Moccas, and Bridge Sollars."[97]

The database of fines produced by this study has allowed analysis of these processes. The following graph illustrates the number of Herefordshire fines issued, per year, 1199-1507. It reveals a sustained rise in the numbers of fines issued from *c.* 1275 to *c.* 1348.

Graph H5: Numbers of fines issued per year.



[97] Owen, 'Occupation of the land: Wales and the Marches', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* Vol. III, *1348-1500, op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

The most noticeable rises during this period were in the years, 1311-12 and, more significantly, 1315-18. This evidence supports the view that the famine years of the early fourteenth century saw significant rises in the amount of land transfers in Herefordshire. The famine years stand out even more sharply when the average number of fines issued per year is considered. During the period 1300-50 the average number of fines issued per year is 8.5. The following list shows how the figures are well above average during the years of the famine:

1313 = 9

1314 = 7

1315 = 20

1316 = 10

1317 = 15

1318 = 22

1319 = 13

1320 = 6

1321 = 8

1322 = 8

The years 1318 and 1315 respectively have the second and third highest numbers of fines issued of any year in the period 1300-50. In 1315, the first year of the famine, the parishes with the most transactions per year, the highest first, are as follows: Leominster, Dilwyn, Weobley, Vowchurch and Clehonger. When compared with the *Nonarum*

Inquisitiones (see 2.7 above) Leominster and the surrounding area is noted as a district with tracts of uncultivated land (Leominster, Dilwyn and Weobley are in close proximity). Furthermore, in Clehonger (along with the adjacent manor of Allensmore) ". . . ten virgates of land lay uncultivated . . . because of the poverty of the inhabitants".[98] This suggests a correlation between high numbers of fines issued and areas known to have been experiencing difficulties during this period from the evidence of other sources.

Graphs H1, H2, H3 and H4 show the land types over this period, revealing that arable and wood saw the most significant rises during the famine years. This is in keeping with the view of people such as Kershaw, Stinson and Kissock who have noted the increase in the amount of arable coming onto the market in the early fourteenth century and the increase in woodland clearances, particularly in the worst years of the famine.[99] Stinson has argued that the problems of the early fourteenth century led to an increase in woodland clearances among those with very little land, driven by desperation to a "farm or starve" situation.[100] The rise in the amount of woodland transfers in Herefordshire at this time may be indicative of assarting in the face of the famine in the region. Graph H4 above shows a rise in the amount of woodland recorded in the first half of the fourteenth century, with particularly noticeable peaks in conveyance in the following years: 1304, 1308, 1314, 1318, 1327, 1335, 1339, 1342, 1349, 1351. The most significant rise was in 1318. A similar process may be in evidence relating to transactions involving moor. Just 308 acres

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[98] J. R. Maddicott, "The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown, 1294-1341, *Past and Present,* Supplement I, (1975); *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Seaccaria,* ed. G. Vanderzee (Record Commissioners, 1807), pp. 143-152.

[99] Kershaw, *op. cit.,* pp. 3-50; M. Stinson, 'Assarting and Poverty in Early Fourteenth Century Western Yorkshire', *Landscape History,* 5 (1983), pp. 53-67; Kissock, *op. cit.,* pp. 130-147.

[100] Stinson, *op. cit.,* pp. 53-67.

of moor are recorded for the whole period, the first mention was in 1278 when William, son of Roger Warin de Hope Solers obtained two acres of moor in Hope Solers along with a messuage, 40 acres of arable, three acres of meadow and five acres of wood, from Sedoma, the wife of Roger Warin de Hope Solers, through her attorney at Westminster, John Joye.[101] The last mention of moor was in 1507 when William Rudhale, Richard Dobyns and Richard Jones obtained four acres along with a house, 24 acres of arable, 16 acres of meadow and ten acres of pasture in Walford.[102] This transfer was the first since 1430. Most of the transfers occurred in the first half of the fourteenth century and probably represent areas where marginal land was turned over to arable during the famine years. The highest single transfer was in 1316 when 21 acres, along with 73 acres of arable, ten acres of pasture, 21 acres of wood, a messuage and 32/- 7d rent in Bickerton by Tedgewood were surrendered to John De Barwe (represented at Westminster by his attorney Hugh de Hull) from John de Bickerton.[103]

This evidence shows that feet of fines became an increasingly popular method of conveyance in the fourteenth century, particularly the early years. It seems likely that they were seen as a convenient way of obtaining land and property with the added benefit of legal title at a time of great upheaval and uncertainty.

[101] PRO: CP25/1/81/18/32.

[102] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/27.

[103] PRO: CP25/1/82/32/118.

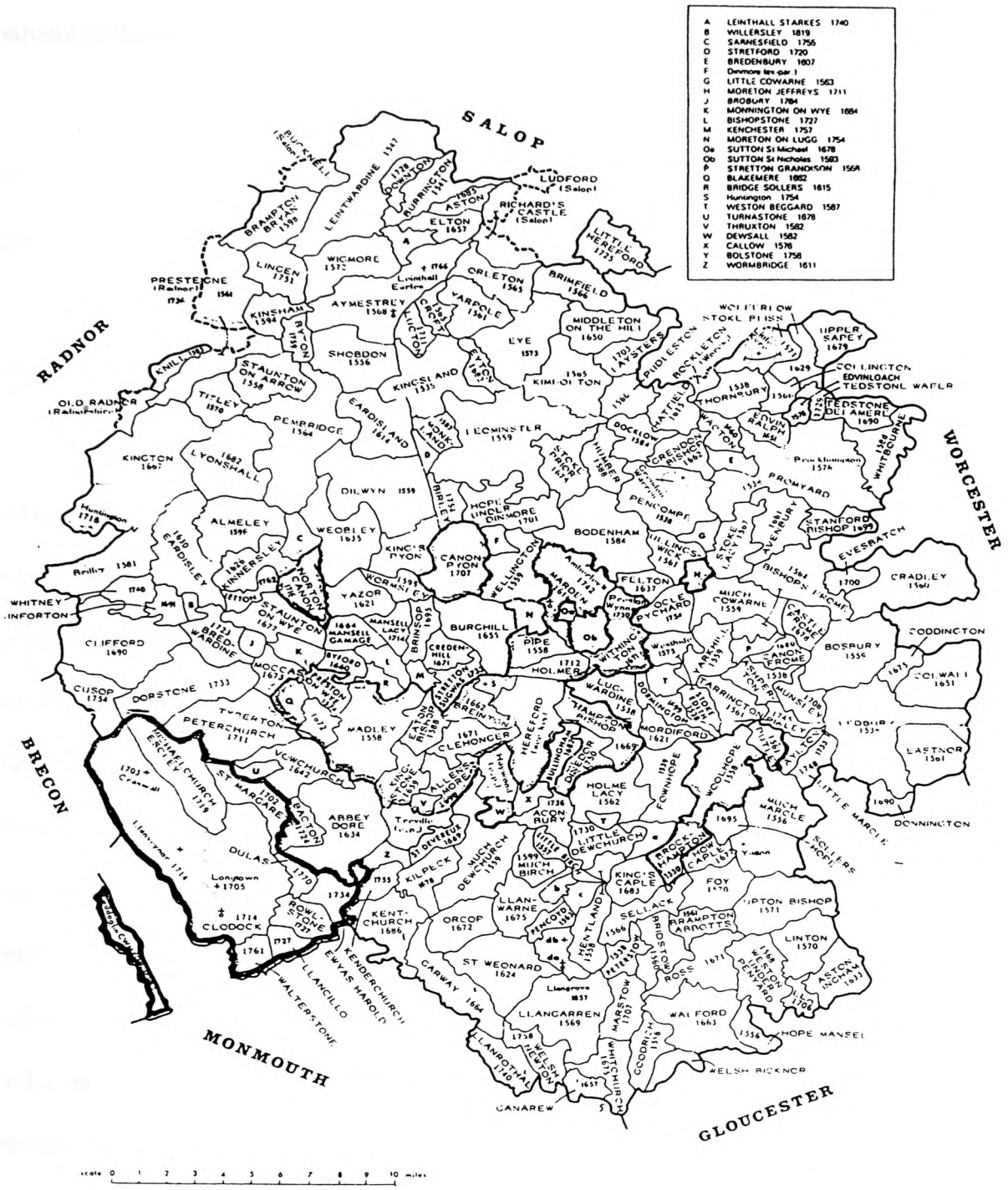
4.6 Distribution of land-types and settlement in medieval Herefordshire, mapping the evidence.

The following maps have been generated from the database of fines and show the distribution and densities of the various land types throughout the various regions of Herefordshire in the Middle Ages. The names of the parishes are shown in map H5. The data has been organized in approximate fifty-year time spans. The maps can be used in conjunction with the above tables and graphs to reveal trends in the historical-geography of the Herefordshire landscape. The evidence will be assessed on a regional level, to establish the relative percentages of different land types in the various districts of Herefordshire, and on a parish level to discover more local trends.

4.6(i) Distribution and density of land types, 1199-1507.

Map H6 reveals the regional percentages of the total acreages of all types of land recorded in the fines, 1199-1507. The Central Plain is the largest region and has by far the highest percentage of land recorded (48.5%). The Eastern Plain is the next most significant region with 18% followed by the Western Border and Bromyard Upland with 10% and 8% respectively. The small Woolhope Region has a comparatively significant 5% and is followed by Archenfield (4.5%), the Ross Region (3.5%), the North West Upland (1.5%) and Ewias (1%). Map H7 shows the distribution of land on a parish level and reveals patterns at a sub-regional level. For example, the data for Ewias is shown to be limited to a few parishes in the southeast of the region, whereas the data for the Ross Region is shown to be fairly evenly distributed. These two maps reveal that fines were

H5: Herefordshire parishes (after the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies.)

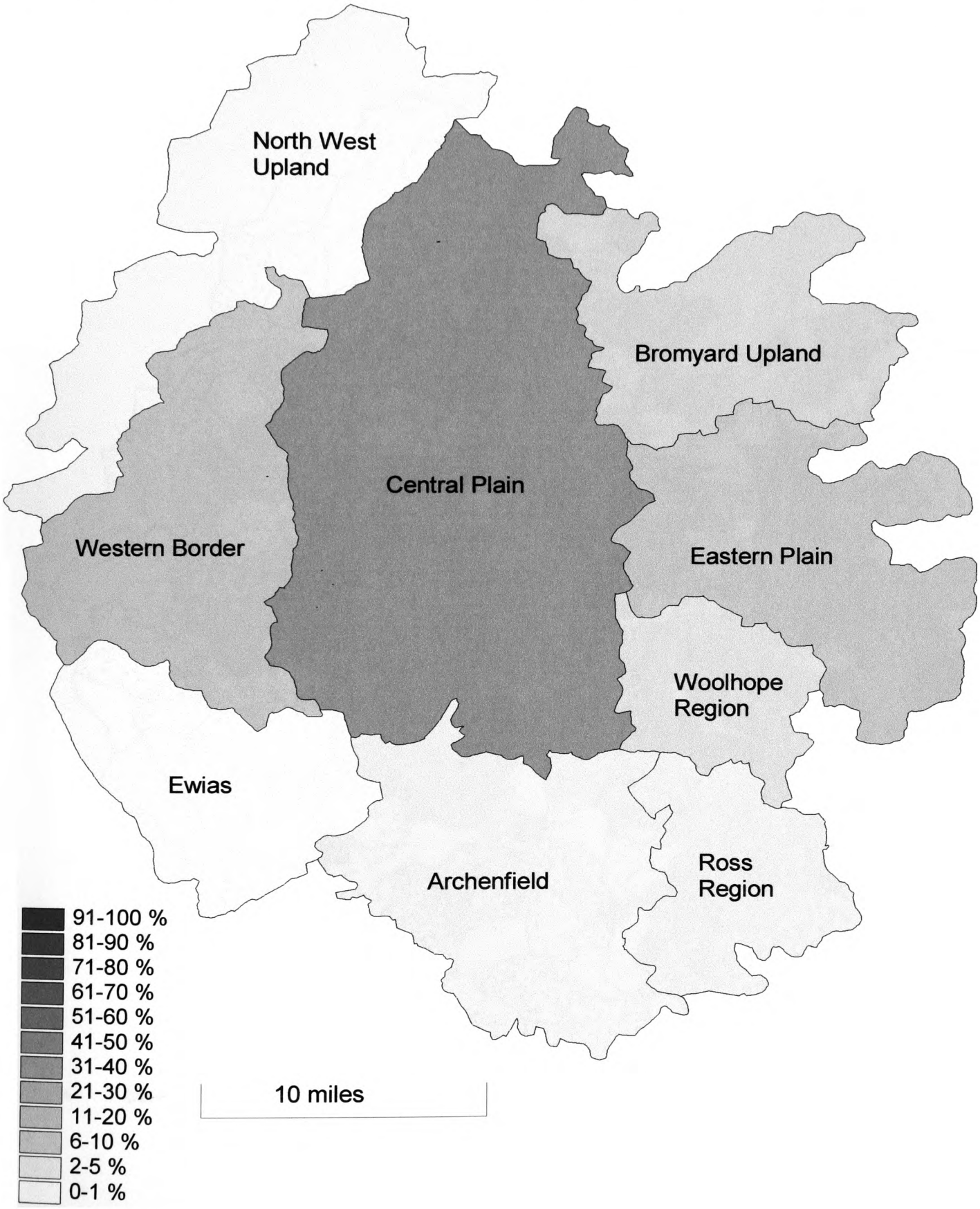

A LEINTHALL STARKES 1740
B WILLERSLEY 1819
C SARNESFIELD 1756
D STRETFORD 1720
E BREDENBURY 1807
F Denmore lies par I
G LITTLE COWARNE 1563
H MORETON JEFFREYS 1711
J BROBURY 1784
K MONNINGTON ON WYE 1684
L BISHOPSTONE 1727
M KENCHESTER 1757
N MORETON ON LUGG 1754
Oa SUTTON St Michael 1678
Ob SUTTON St Nicholas 1583
P STRETTON GRANDISON 1568
Q BLAKEMERE 1802
R BRIDGE SOLLERS 1815
S Huntington 1754
T WESTON BEGGARD 1587
U TURNASTONE 1678
V THRUXTON 1582
W DEWSALL 1582
X CALLOW 1576
Y BOLSTONE 1758
Z WORMBRIDGE 1611
SALOP
RADNOR
WORCESTER
BRECON
MONMOUTH
GLOUCESTER
LUDFORD (Salop)
RICHARD'S CASTLE (Salop)
PRESTEIGNE (Radnor)
OLD RADNOR (Radnor)
WHITNEY (Radnor)
CLIFFORD 1690
DORSTONE 1733
PETERCHURCH 1711
ABBEY DORE 1634
DULAS
CLODOCK 1714
ORCOP 1672
ST WEONARD 1624
LLANGARREN 1569
WALFORD 1683
HOPE MANSEL
WELSH BICKNOR
CANAREW
KENTCHURCH 1686
KENDERCHURCH
EWYAS HAROLD
WALTERSTONE
LLANCILLO
LLANROTHAL 1740
CLEHONGER 1671
BURGHILL 1655
HOLME LACY 1562
HEREFORD
ROSS
LEDBURY
LEOMINSTER 1559
BODENHAM 1584
FELTON 1637
YAZOR 1621
CANON PYON 1707
DILWYN 1559
PEMBRIDGE 1564
KINGTON 1607
ALMELEY 1596
WEOBLEY 1635
STAUNTON ON WYE 1558
EARDISLAND 1614
KINGSLAND 1535
EYE 1573
MIDDLETON ON THE HILL 1650
AYMESTREY 1568
WIGMORE 1572
LEINTWARDINE 1547
ELTON 1657
ASTON 1583
ORLETON 1563
BRIMFIELD 1565
LITTLE HEREFORD 1725
LINGEN 1731
KINSHAM 1594
SHOBDON 1556
TITLEY 1570
BRAMPTON BRYAN 1598
BURFORD 1640
BROMYARD
STANFORD BISHOP 1699
EVESRATCH
CRADLEY 1561
BOSBURY 1555
COLWALL 1651
LEDDINGTON
DONNINGTON
LITTLE MARCLE
LEDBURY 1555
EASTNOR 1561
MUCH MARCLE 1556
WOOLHOPE 1558
FOWNHOPE 1539
MORDIFORD 1621
HAMPTON BISHOP
LUCTON 1538
WITHINGTON 1538
PIPE 1558
HOLMER 1712
MUCH COWARNE 1559
CASTLE FROME 1678
CANON FROME 1538
ASHPER
MUNSLEY
PENCOMBE 1538
STOKE LACY 1567
AVENBURY 1561
BISHOPS FROME 1564
PROMYARD 1554
WHITBOURNE 1568
EDVINLOACH
TEDSTONE DELAMERE 1690
TEDSTONE WAFRE
COLLINGTON
BRINFIELD 1565
LITTLE COWARNE 1563
MUCH BIRCH 1399
LITTLE DEWCHURCH 1730
ACONBURY 1736
KINGS CAPLE 1683
FOY 1670
SELLACK
PENCOED 1567
HENTLAND 1558
PETERSTOW 1558
BRIDSTOW 1560
LLANWARNE 1675
MUCH DEWCHURCH 1559
KILPECK 1678
ST DEVEREUX 1669
ABBEY DORE 1634
LLANCILLO
WALTERSTONE
KENDERCHURCH
EWYAS HAROLD
ROWLESTONE 1727
LONGTOWN 1705
CRASWALL 1703
LLANVIHANGEL CRUCORNEY 1719
ST MARGARETS 1707
FACTON 1712
VOWCHURCH 1642
MADLEY 1558
TYBERTON 1711
DORSTONE 1733
CUSOP 1754
BREDWARDINE 1723
MOCCAS 1675
BRILLEY 1581
WHITNEY
HUNTINGTON 1718
EARDISLEY 1610
KINNERSLEY 1629
MORTON ON LUGG 1762
STAUNTON ON WYE 1677
MANSELL LACY 1714
MANSELL GAMAGE 1664
BRINSOP 1695
YAZOR 1621
CANON PYON 1707
WELLINGTON 1559
MARDEN 1742
PRESTON WYNNE 1739
POPLE PYCHARD 1754
WITHINGTON 1538
LUCTON 1538
HAMPTON BISHOP
MORDIFORD 1621
FOWNHOPE 1539
WOOLHOPE 1558
MUCH MARCLE 1556
LITTLE MARCLE
SOLLERS HOPE
LEDBURY 1555
EASTNOR 1561
COLWALL 1651
CODDINGTON
CRADLEY 1561
EVESRATCH
STANFORD BISHOP 1699

being used in all the regions of Herefordshire as a method of conveyance. There are some parishes for which there is no data and some regions where transactions were much less frequent, but overall the data set has proved to be wide ranging.

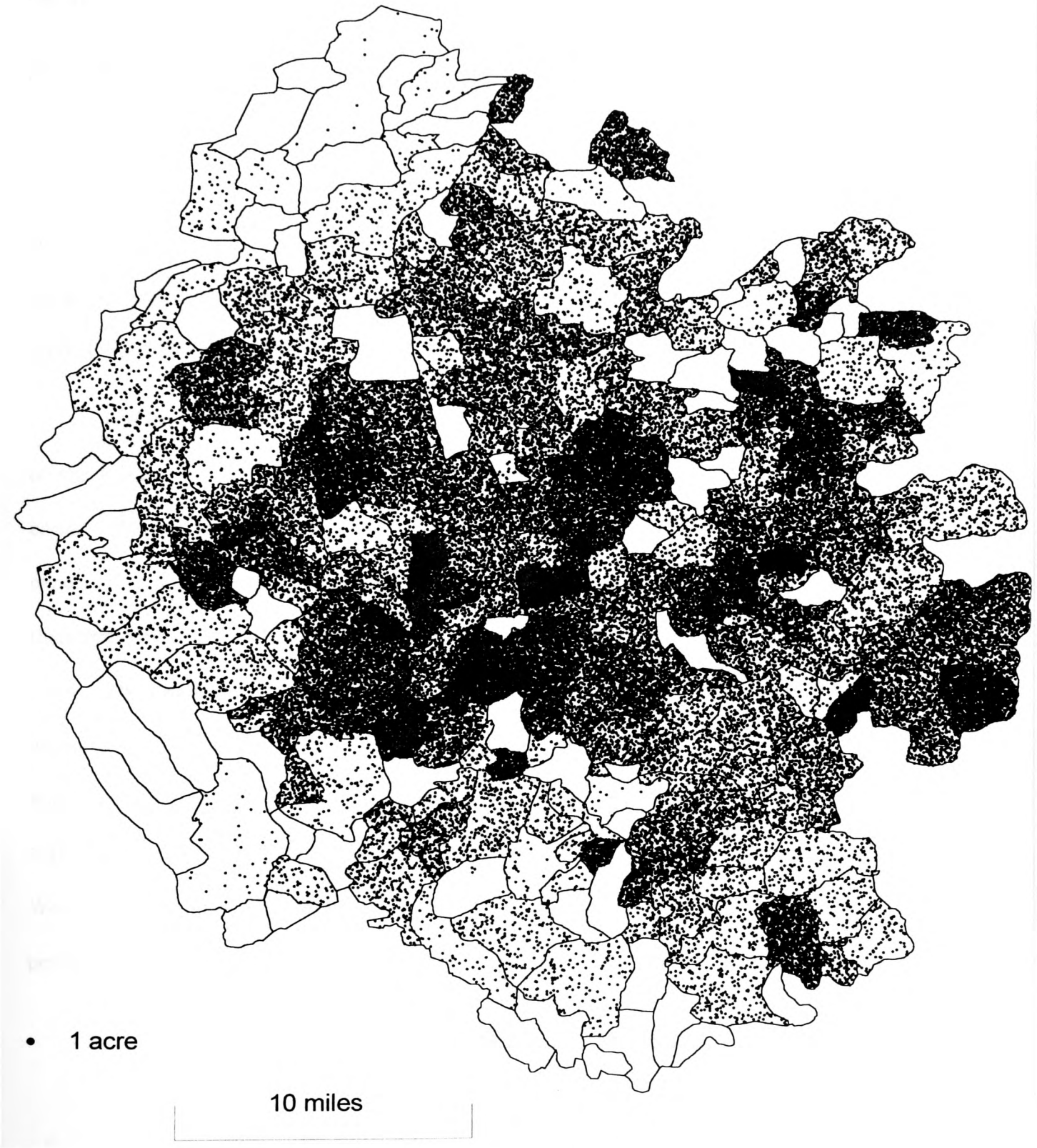
On a regional basis, the dominance of the middle part of Herefordshire is obvious; there is a distinct belt from the Western Border through the Central Plain to the Eastern Plain and the Bromyard Upland. These are the regions with the highest percentages of land recorded. The south and northwest of the county is made up of regions with much lower percentages, characteristically the marginal, border and upland regions.

On a sub-regional level, the highest densities of land appear on the Central Plain, particularly to the west and north of Hereford and on the Eastern Plain around Ledbury. Density is also high in the southern part of the Bromyard Upland. Slightly less dense areas include the northern part of the Central Plain, the Woolhope Region and the Ross Region. Densities are lowest in southern Archenfield, Ewias, and the western extremities of the Western Border, the North-West Upland and parts of the Bromyard Upland. When compared with a relief map (H2) it can be seen that the areas with little or no records of land are the uplands of the county. Most of these districts were influenced, physically and/or culturally, by their links with Wales. It seems likely that both these factors have played a role in the pattern that has emerged. There would be little land suitable for arable production (the most frequently mentioned land type in fines) in the highest areas and it is possible that the majority of the Welsh population in Herefordshire were using alternative methods of conveyance (see 4.7 below).

H6: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-15



H7: Distribution of acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.



4.6(ii) Changes in land over time.

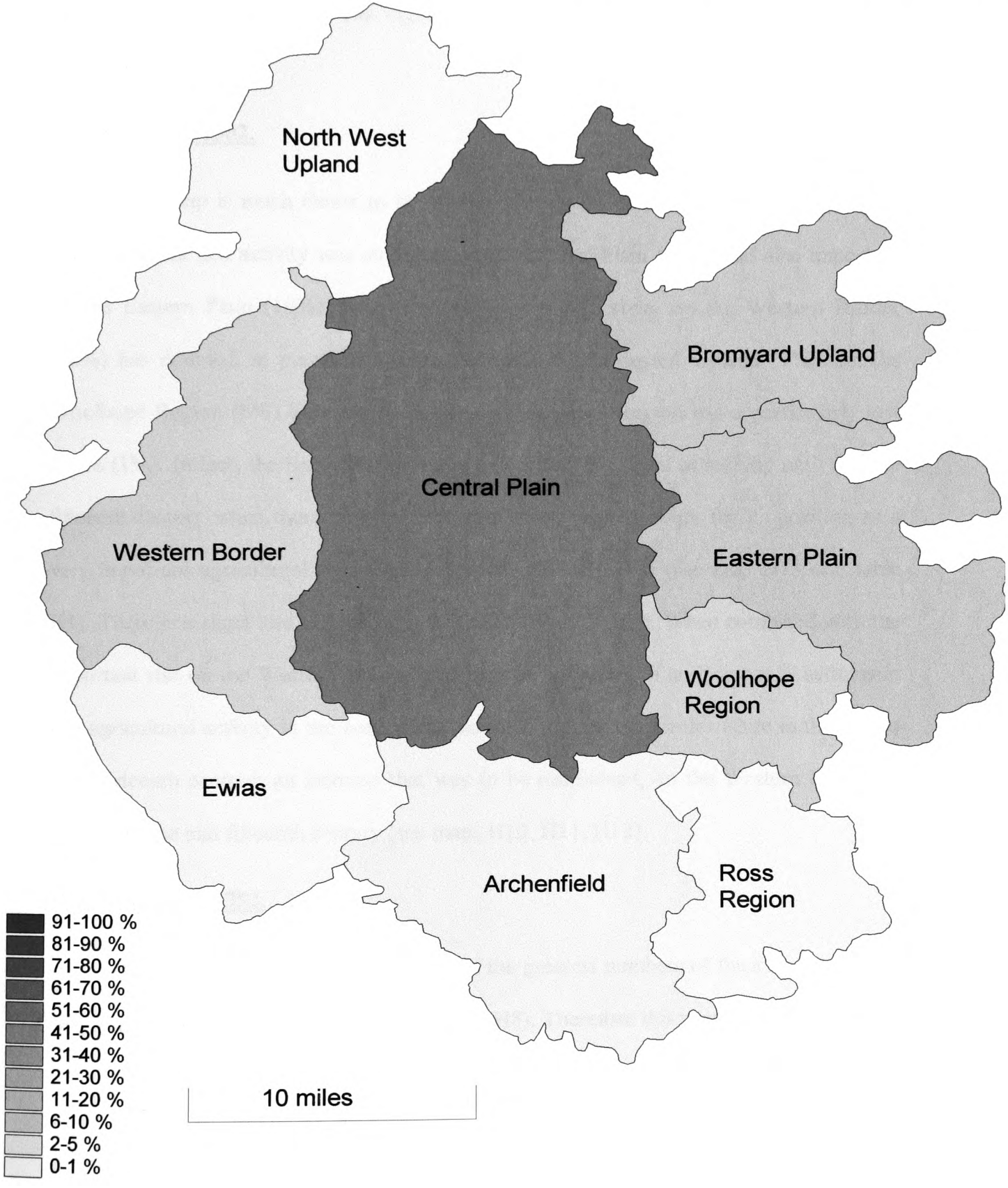
The next series of maps, H8, H9, H10, H11, H12 and H13, provide an analysis of the changes apparent in the percentages of total acreages of all types of land over time.

Map H8: 1199-1250.

This maps displays a broadly similar pattern to map H6. The Central Plain (51%) dominates with the Eastern Plain (14%) and Bromyard Uplands (13%) proving to be significant regions, the southern and northwestern regions much less so. However, the small Woolhope Region, at 8%, appears quite significant and the Western Border has quite a low figure (5%) in comparison with the overall picture revealed in map H6.

The map suggests that most of the land transfers recorded in fines in the first half of the thirteenth-century were concentrated in the central and eastern regions of the county. The activity in the Woolhope Region is interesting. The larger regions may be expected to have higher percentages because they have a greater number of parishes, therefore when a small region like Woohope has a reasonably high percentage, it is particularly significant. The Woolhope Region is a distinctive area that seems to have attracted settlement and agricultural activity from an early date (see 4.1 above). Its importance, as revealed by the fines, will be examined in relation to the maps concerned with changing land use over time (maps H14-H47). The relatively low percentage of the Western Border may be indicative of a continuation of the situation in the early medieval period, whereby settlement in this district was quite low (see 4.1 above). This is

H8: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



interesting when the following maps (H9, H10, H11, H12) are considered as they highlight a notable rise in activity in this region from the late thirteenth to the mid fifteenth centuries.

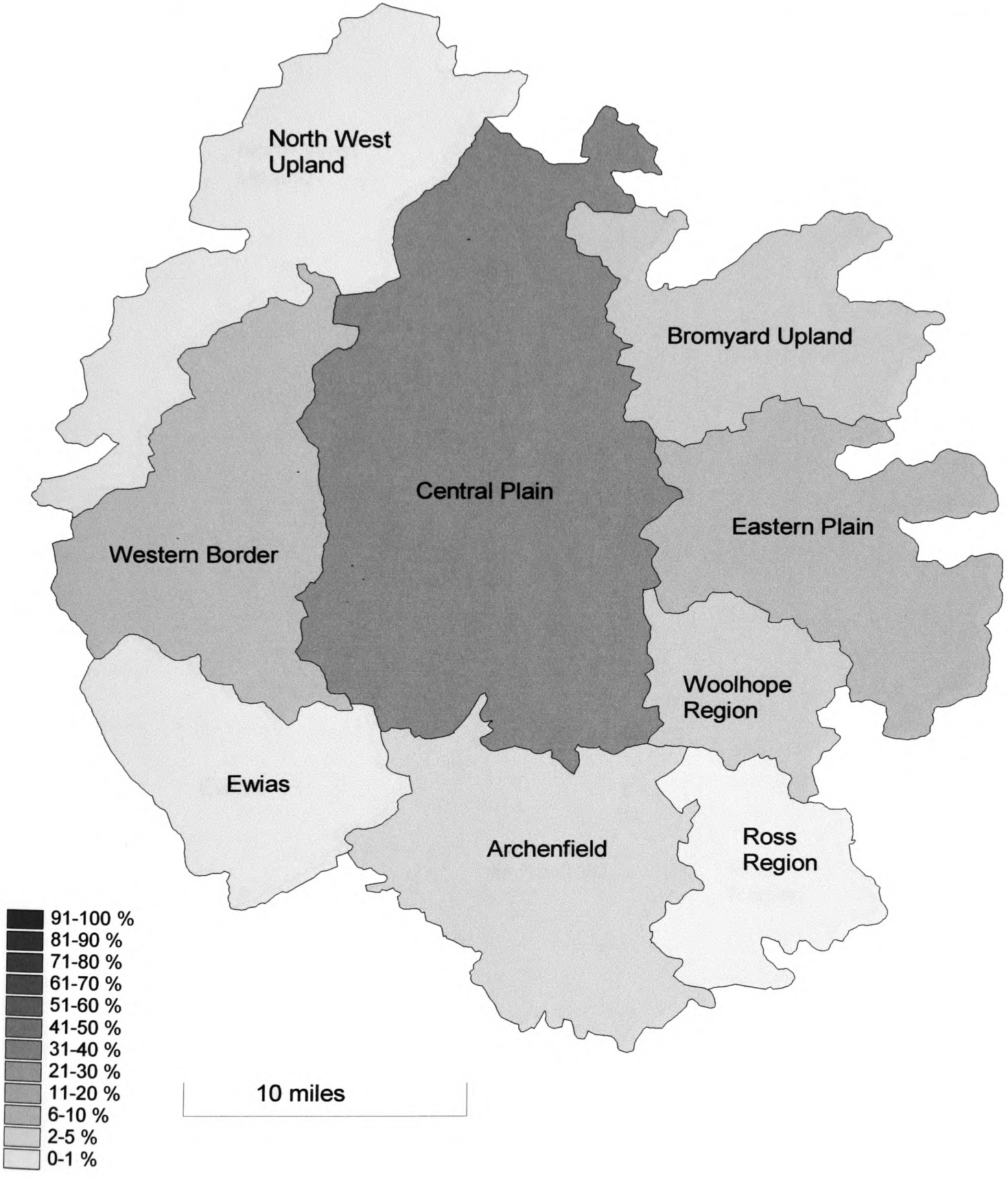
Map H9: 1251-1302.

This map is much closer to the overall picture indicated by map H6. It indicates that settlement and activity was strongest on the Central Plain (48%) and also important on the Eastern Plain (19%). From the previous map, activity on the Western Border (10%) has doubled, in percentage terms, whereas the Bromyard Upland (7%) and the Woolhope Region (6%) have experienced falls. The Ross Region has a particularly low figure (1%). In fact, the Ross Region remains at a very low level of activity until the late fifteenth century when there is a dramatic rise which helps account for its position as a very important agricultural region in the post-medieval period (see map H13 and table H1). There is a slight rise in activity in the North West Upland. When combined with the important rise on the Western Border, this may be indicative of an increase in settlement and agricultural activity in the border and marginal regions of Herefordshire in the mid to late thirteenth century; an increase that was to be maintained, on the Western Border at least, until the mid fifteenth century (see maps H10, H11, H12).

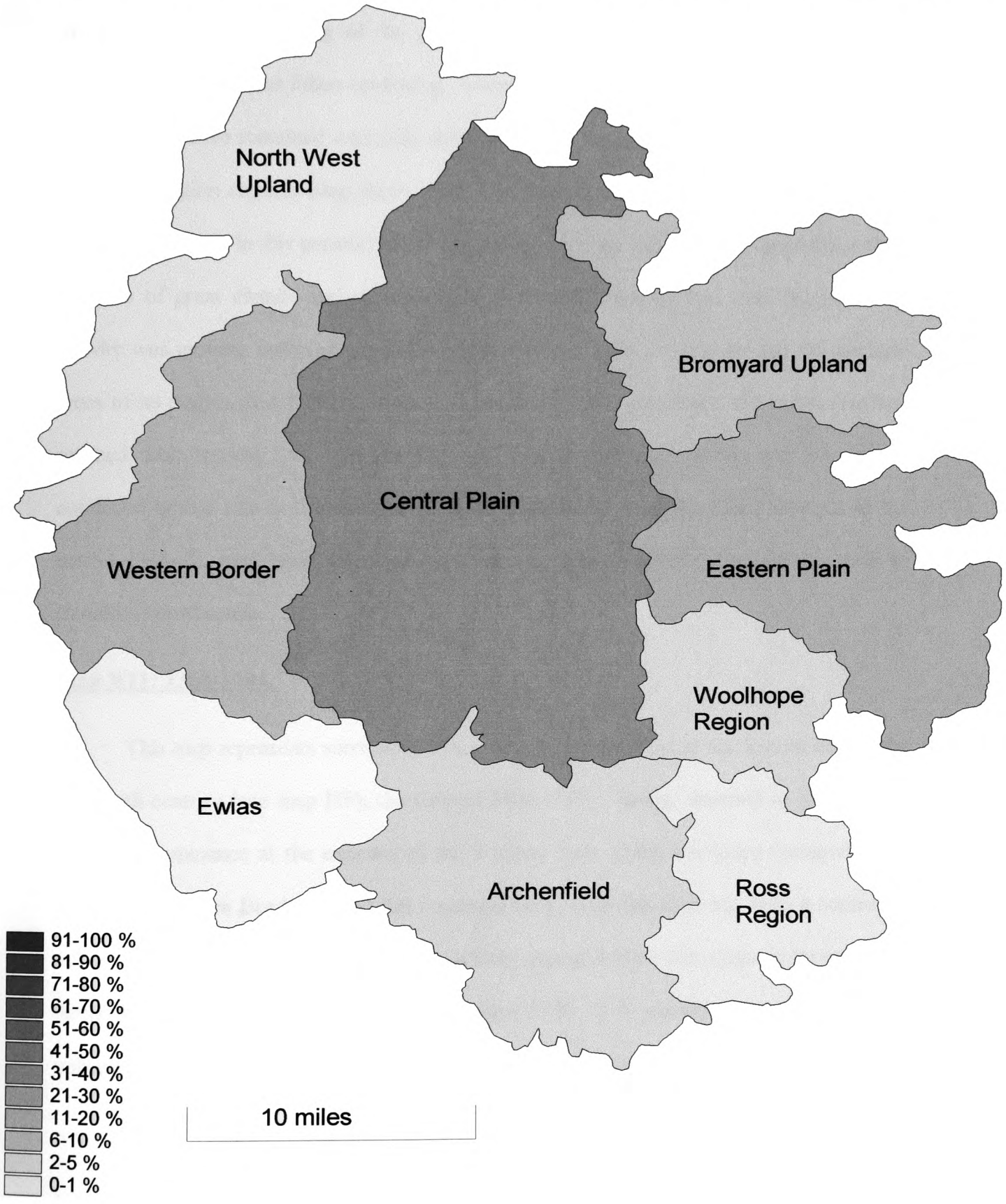
Map H10: 1303-1352.

This map coincides with the period of the greatest numbers of fines issued and the highest percentage of land identified (see table H8). Therefore this map represents the best

H9: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



H10: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.

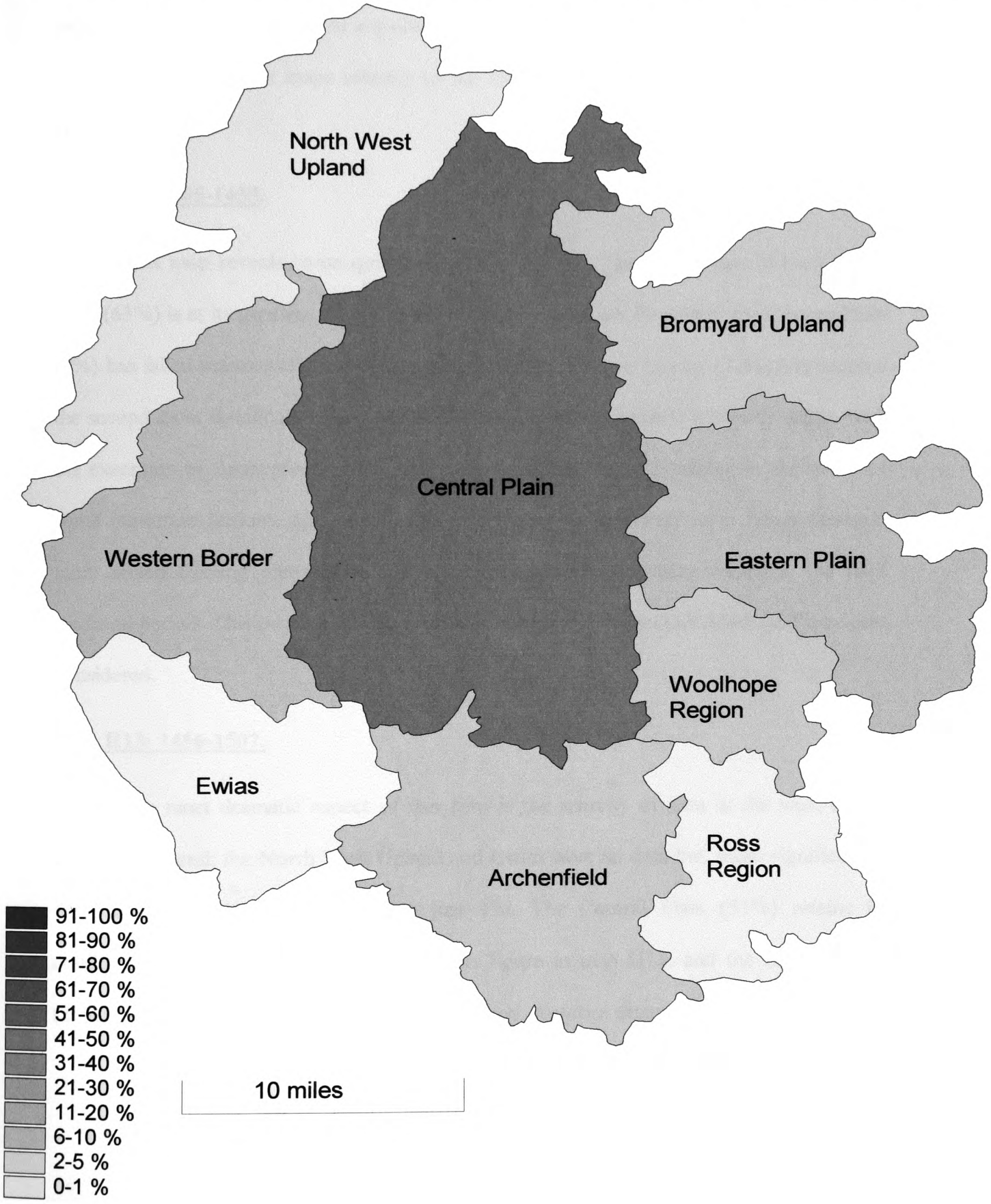


data set in the Herefordshire series. It also reveals some interesting trends, the most notable being the narrowing of the gap between the Central and Eastern Plains. The Central Plain (41%) has fallen somewhat, whereas the Eastern Plain (22%) has risen. The other regions have remained relatively stable with the Western Border, Bromyard Upland and Ross Region experiencing slight rises. The map indicates more activity in a greater area of the county in this period than in any other. The first half of the fourteenth century was one of great change and upheaval (see section 4.5 above). The map suggests that activity was moving outwards from the centre of the county, especially into the lowland areas of its eastern and western borders. It is possible that settlement and cultivation had reached their natural limits on the Central Plain by the early 1300s and this factor, combined with a rise in the demand for land following the series of bad harvests in the period 1315-22, may have led to an expansion in agrarian activity beyond the areas of traditional dominance.

Map H11: 1353-1404.

This map represents something of a return to the situation in the second half of the thirteenth century (see map H9); the Central Plain (50%) having returned to its status of complete dominance at the expense of the Eastern Plain which has fallen (somewhat) to 17%. The Western Border (11%) has remained very stable but there has been a continued fall in the Bromyard Upland (6%). There is little change in the other regions; for example, Archenfield has remained at around 5% since 1199. It is possible that following the upheavals and the massive mortality of the early fourteenth century, there was an

H11: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



opportunity for the Central Plain to return to its previous position as more holdings became available. An analysis of any changes in land use associated with this period will be examined in subsequent maps relating to the various land types recorded in the feet of fines.

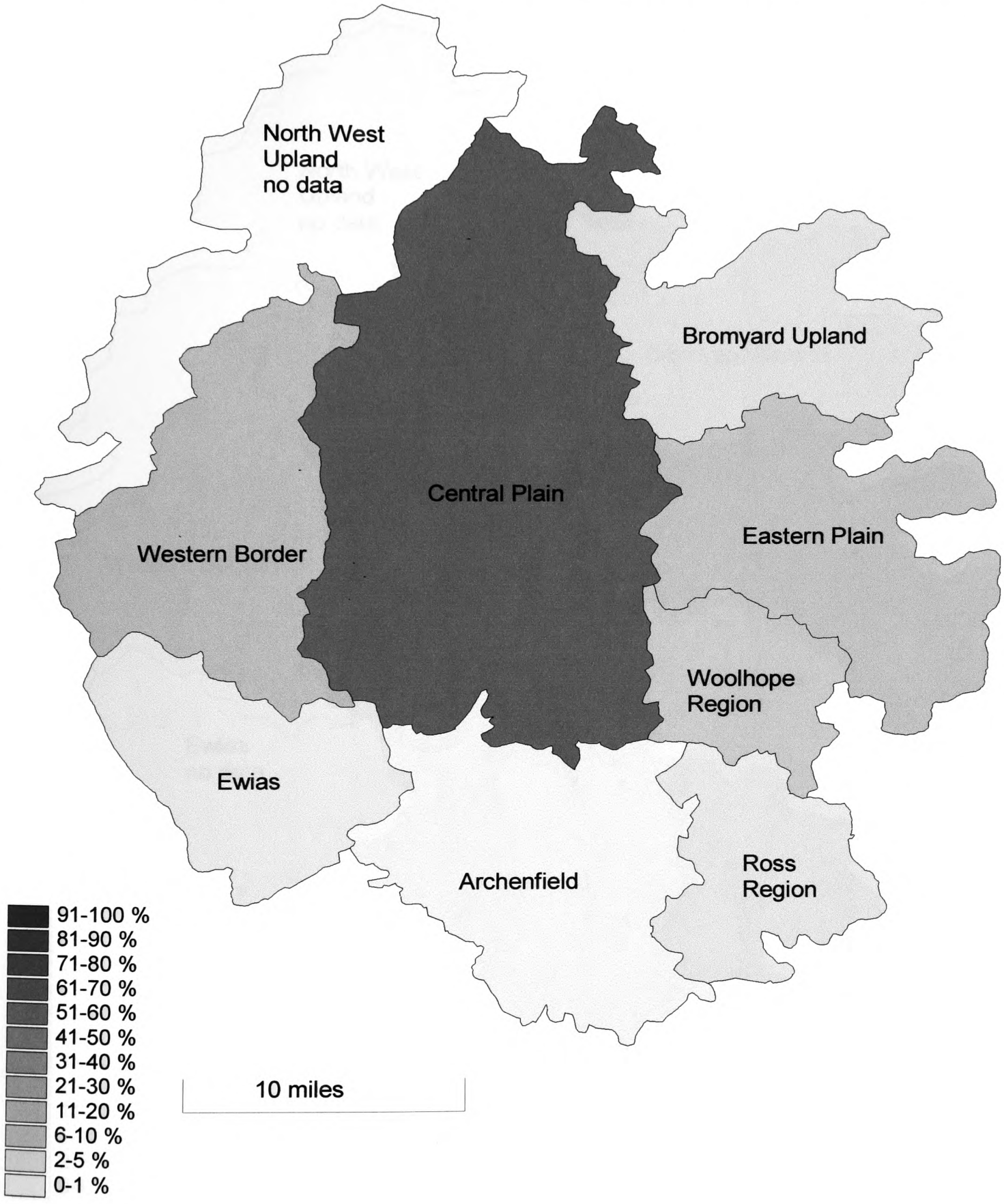
Map H12: 1405-1455.

This map reveals some quite interesting changes. The dominance of the Central Plain (63%) is at its greatest for any of the periods in question. However, the Eastern Plain (9%) has fallen dramatically and for the first time, the Western Border (12%) has become the second most significant region. The other regions have remained relatively stable, with the exception of Archenfield, which has fallen to under 1%. The change in the status of some important regions, apparent in this map, could be indicative of a change towards more mixed farming methods as the dominance of arable farming waned in the later medieval period. This process will be analysed more closely when individual land types are considered.

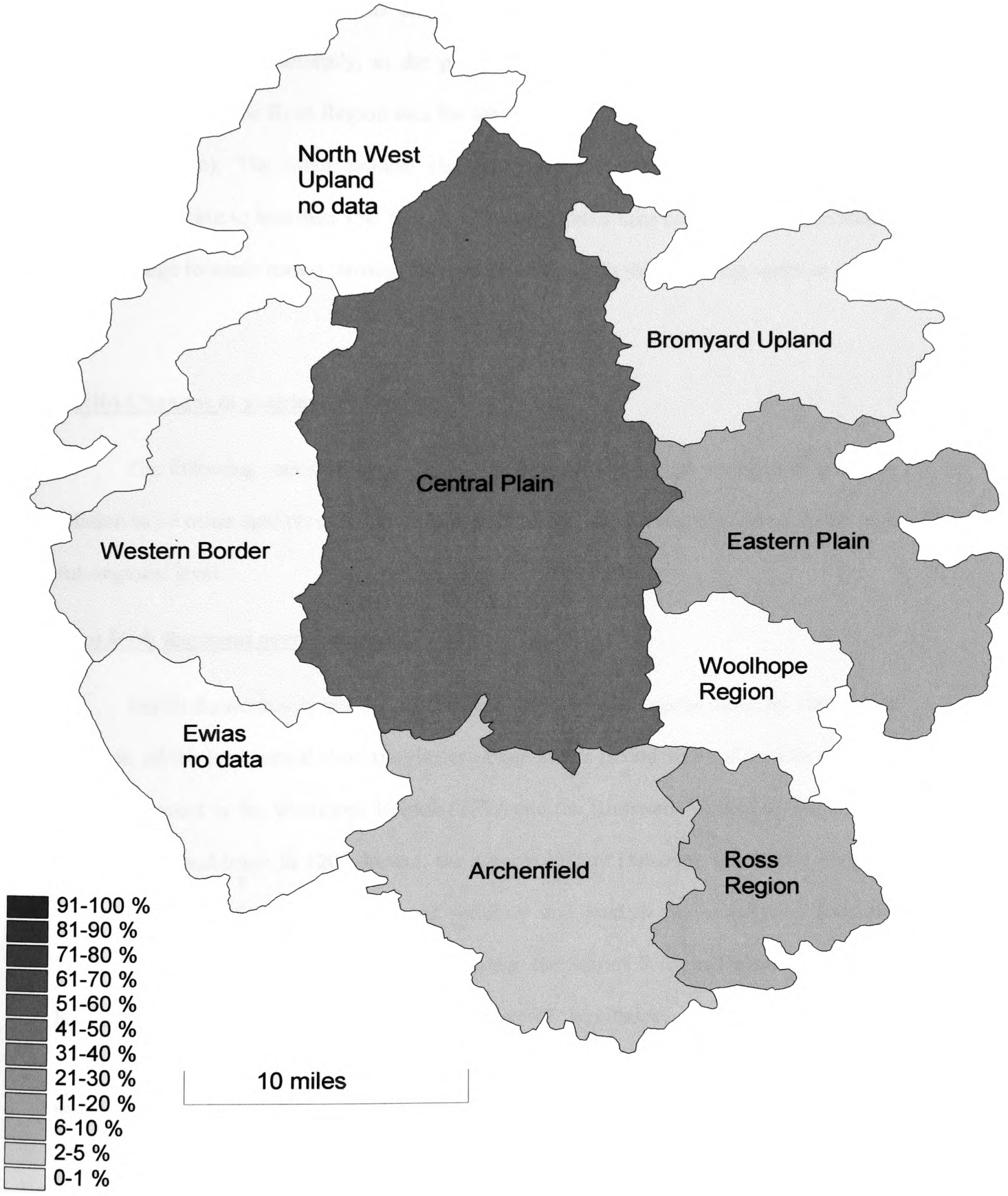
Map H13: 1456-1507.

The most dramatic aspect of this map is the scarcity of data in the west of the county in general; the North West Upland and Ewias have no data but, more significantly, the Western Border has dropped to just 1%. The Central Plain (53%) retains its dominance, despite falling from the previous figure in map H12, and the Eastern Plain (20%) has risen again to a position of importance. Another dramatic change is the rise in

H12: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



H13: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507.



the Ross Region (18%) to a position comparable with the Eastern Plain. This seems indicative of a change, which was to promote southern Herefordshire to a position of great importance, agriculturally, in the post-medieval period; for example, in the mid-nineteenth century the Ross Region was the most significant arable area in the county (see table H1 above). The other notable change revealed by this map is the fall in the Woolhope Region to less than 1%. The changes highlighted here could be further evidence of the change towards mixed farming that will be analysed in the following series of maps.

4.6(iii) Changes in arable over time.

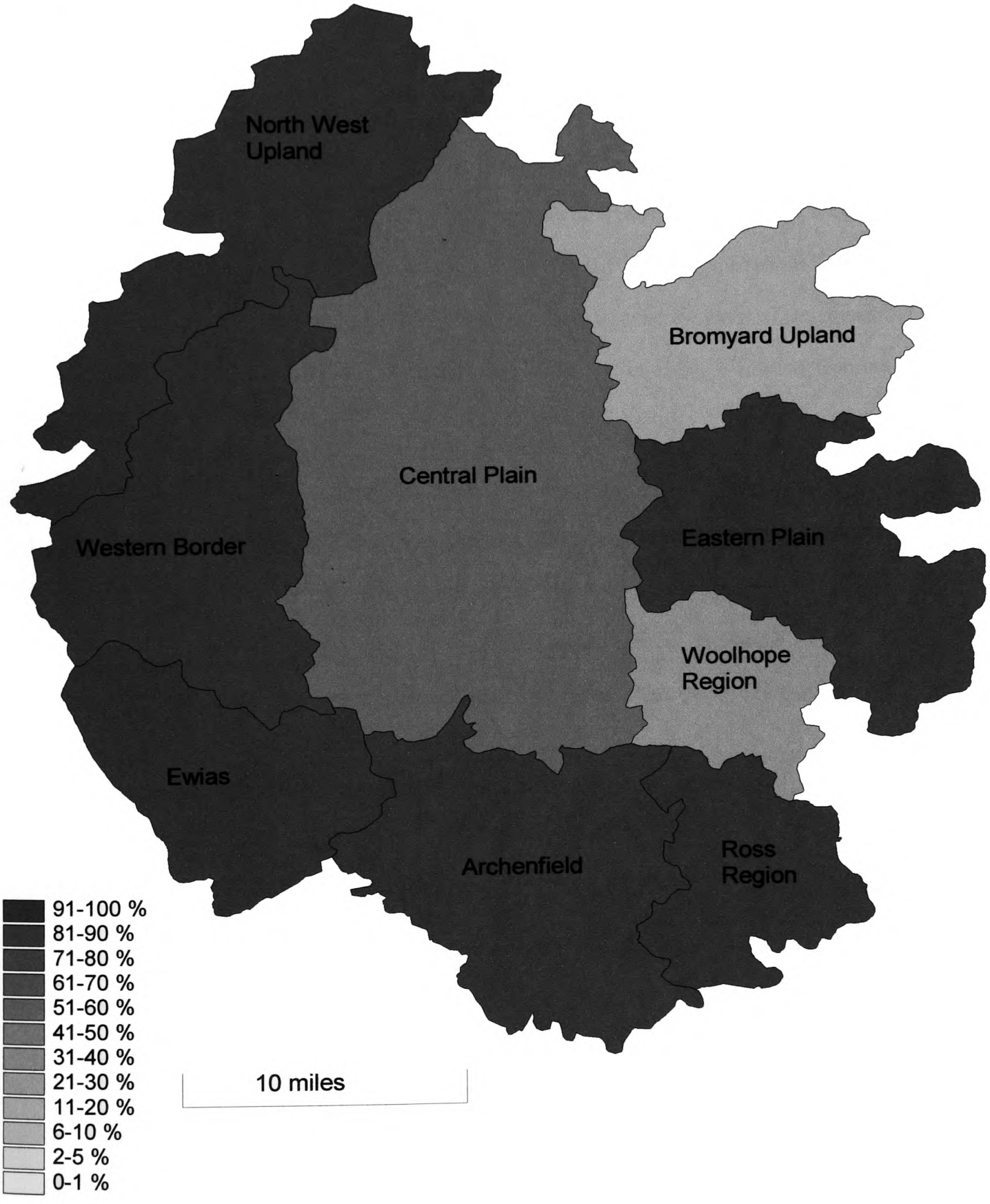
The following series of maps (H14 to H25) represent the percentages of arable in relation to all other land recorded in fines in each region and the distribution of arable on a sub-regional level.

Map H14: Regional percentages, 1199-1250

Arable dominates in six out of the nine regions with figures close to 100%. For example, all the land recorded on the Eastern Plain in this period was arable. The very low figures apparent in the Woolhope Region (45%) and the Bromyard Upland (35%) are due to two individual fines: in 1201 Jordan, the son of William Delamare obtained a Knight's Fee, along with various other items of property and land in the vicinity of Tedstone Delamare, northeast of Bromyard, from Thomas, the son of William Delamare (possibly his brother).[104] Similarly, in Little Marcle, east of Woolhope, in 1226 Richard Tirel

[104] PRO: CP25/1/80/2/31.

H14: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



obtained half a Knight's Fee from Edward Tirel.[105] A Knight's Fee was usually around five hides or 600 acres.[106] It could contain a variety of land types. However, if it is assumed that the majority of the land mentioned would have been arable, then the percentages for the Woolhope Region and the Bromyard Upland would be comparable to the regions approaching 100% coverage. This leaves the Central Plain at 66%. Again, the transfer of Knight's Fees helps explain this figure; in 1206 Eugene de Fyano obtained half a Knight's Fee in Sutton St. Michael, near Marden, from Hugh Fyano.[107] Similarly, a whole Knight's Fee was transferred in Madley in 1222.[108] However, there is some evidence of the transfer of other land types in this vicinity, for example, in Marden, in 1226, Walter de Burcote disposed of 15 acres of pasture.[109]

Overall, therefore, without the fines containing transfers of Knight's Fees the regional percentages would all be very similar and show the dominance of arable as a land type transferred by fines in this period. Map H15 below reveals the pattern of distribution in the various regions and on a parish level. The maps can be compared with those showing the percentages and distribution of other land types in this period (H26 and H27).

Map H15: Distribution, 1199-1250

Transfers of arable are spread throughout all the regions but are very fragmented in certain areas, particularly the northwest, the west and northern Archenfield. The highest

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[105] PRO: CP25/1/80/2/42.

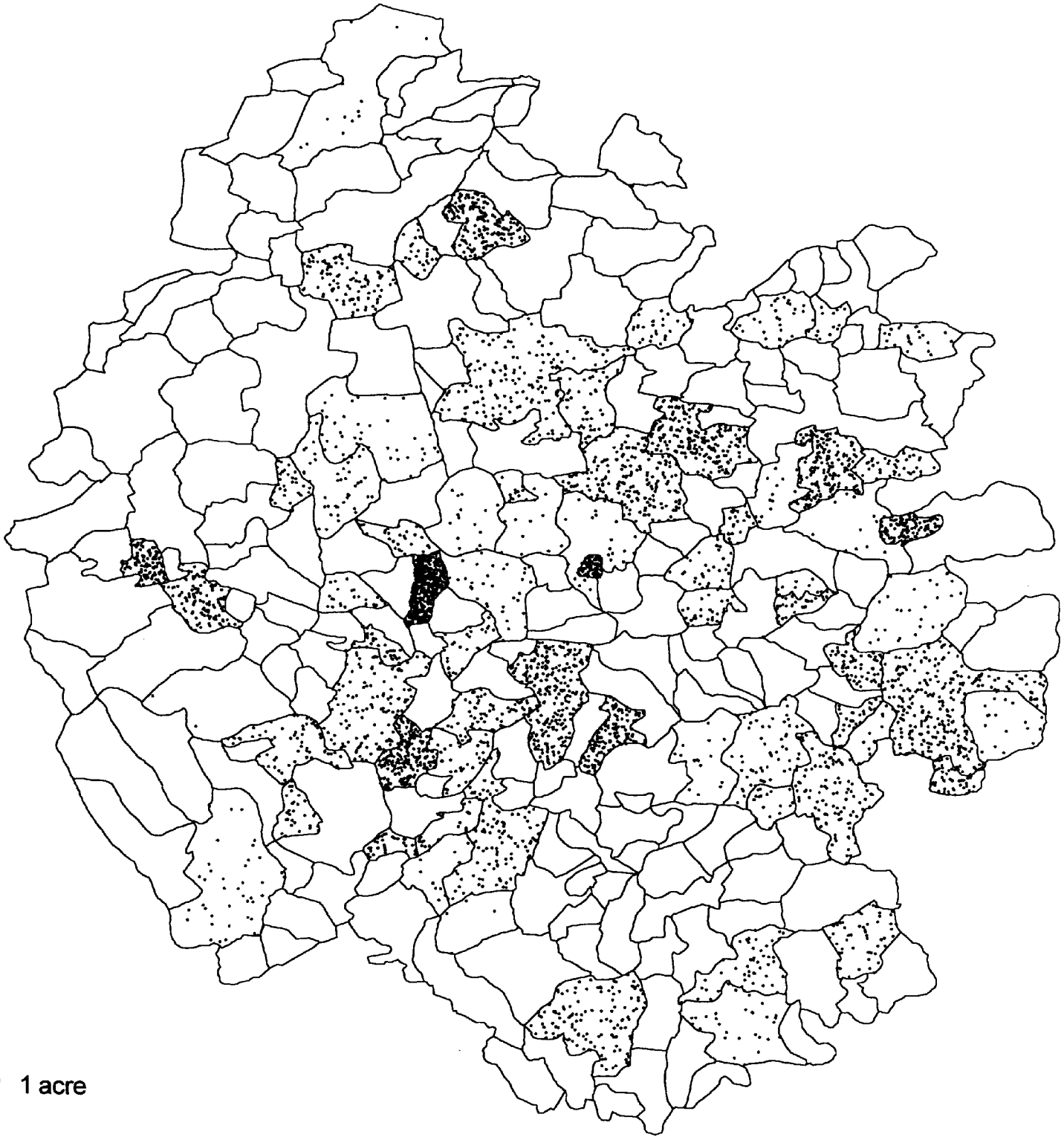
[106] C. R. Chapman, *How heavy, how much and how long: weights, money and other measures used by our ancestors*, (Dursley, 1995), pp. 26-27.

[107] PRO: CP25/80/2/33.

[108] PRO: CP25/1/80/5/56.

[109] PRO: CP25/1/80/6/93.

H15: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



• 1 acre

10 miles

densities recorded are on the Central Plain around a group of parishes to the west of Hereford, notably Brinsop and Kingstone. There is thinner distribution around Leominster and on the Eastern Plain around Ledbury. Although the overall distributions in this period are thin outside the Central and Eastern Plains, there are some interesting clusters, distinct to this era. The arable shown in Clodock is a rare example of a transfer mentioning this land type in Ewias. It relates to the surrender of 40 acres of arable in Maes-Coed in 1204 from Adam, the abbot of Dore to Petronella de Ewias.[110] The distribution in Llangaren represents one of the few records for this part of Archenfield for the whole period covered by the medieval fines. The data comes from two fines; the first was issued in Westminster in 1202 and involved the transfer of 100 acres of arable and a mill in Llangarren from Peter Pyas and Emma, his wife, to Nicholas Le Jeouler.[111] The second was issued at Hereford in 1220 and involved the transfer of 32 acres of arable in Kilreague (Llangarren) from Itheill son of Einion to Sesill Walgh and Eve, his wife and Wludusa, her sister.[112] These two districts have close Welsh links. The transfer in Clodock and the first one in Llangarren may be representative of new settlement in these traditionally Welsh areas. The second Llangarren fine appears to be between people of Welsh origin. There is also a small cluster of arable recorded in the Western Border region around Winforton and Bredwardine, two parishes that are very close to the Welsh border.

Overall, the most important areas of activity represented by this map are the south-western part of the Central Plain, primarily south of the River Wye, the southern part of

[110] PRO: CP25/1/80/2/36.

[111] PRO: CP25/1/80/2/32.

[112] PRO: CP25/1/80/3/22.

the Eastern Plain, east of the River Leadon, the Woolhope Region, some of the Ross Region and Archenfield and a belt running from Leominster to the southeastern part of the Bromyard Upland.

Map H16: Regional percentages, 1251-1302

Although figures for arable are still very high in all regions the figures are all below 100% which indicates that other land types are starting to be recorded more frequently in fines. The most notable region is the Western Border which, at 66%, has a considerably lower percentage than Archenfield, the next lowest region, at 93%. The main reason for this is the transfer of 200 acres of wood and 200 acres of pasture from Walter Deverous to William Waldebeouf in Lyonshall in 1275.[113] There are also other, less significant, reasons such as the ten acres of wood obtained by Roger Ragun from John Folyot, a canon of Hereford, in Vowchurch in 1255.[114] It has been suggested, in response to map H9 above, that there was an increase in settlement in the border districts of Herefordshire, particularly the Western Border, during this period. These transfers of non-arable land, particularly wood, could be indicative of this process; possibly the wood was to be assarted.

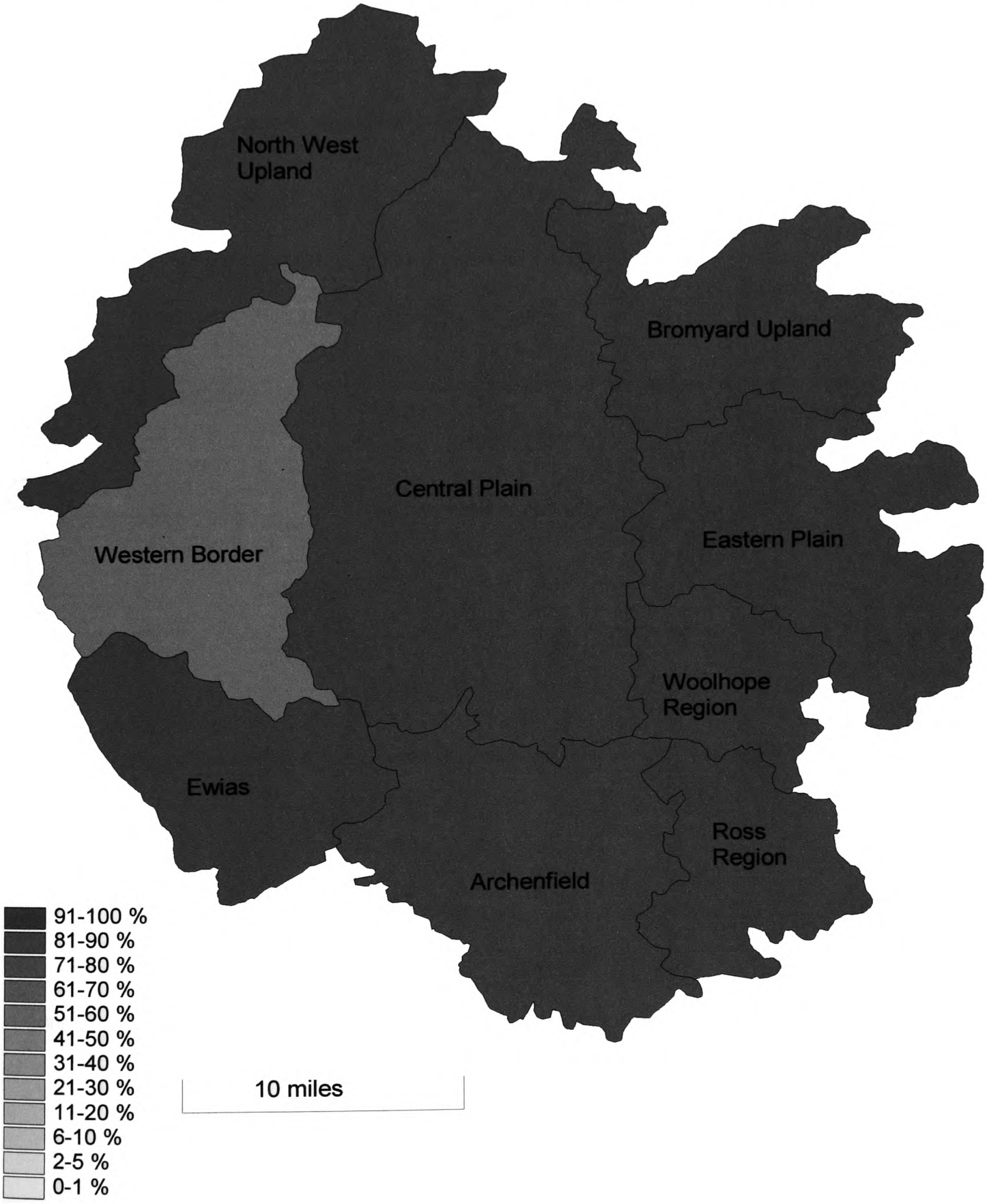
Map H17: Distribution, 1251-1302

There is a definite expansion in the density and distribution of arable transfers over the previous map. There is a move westwards and northwards so that records of arable

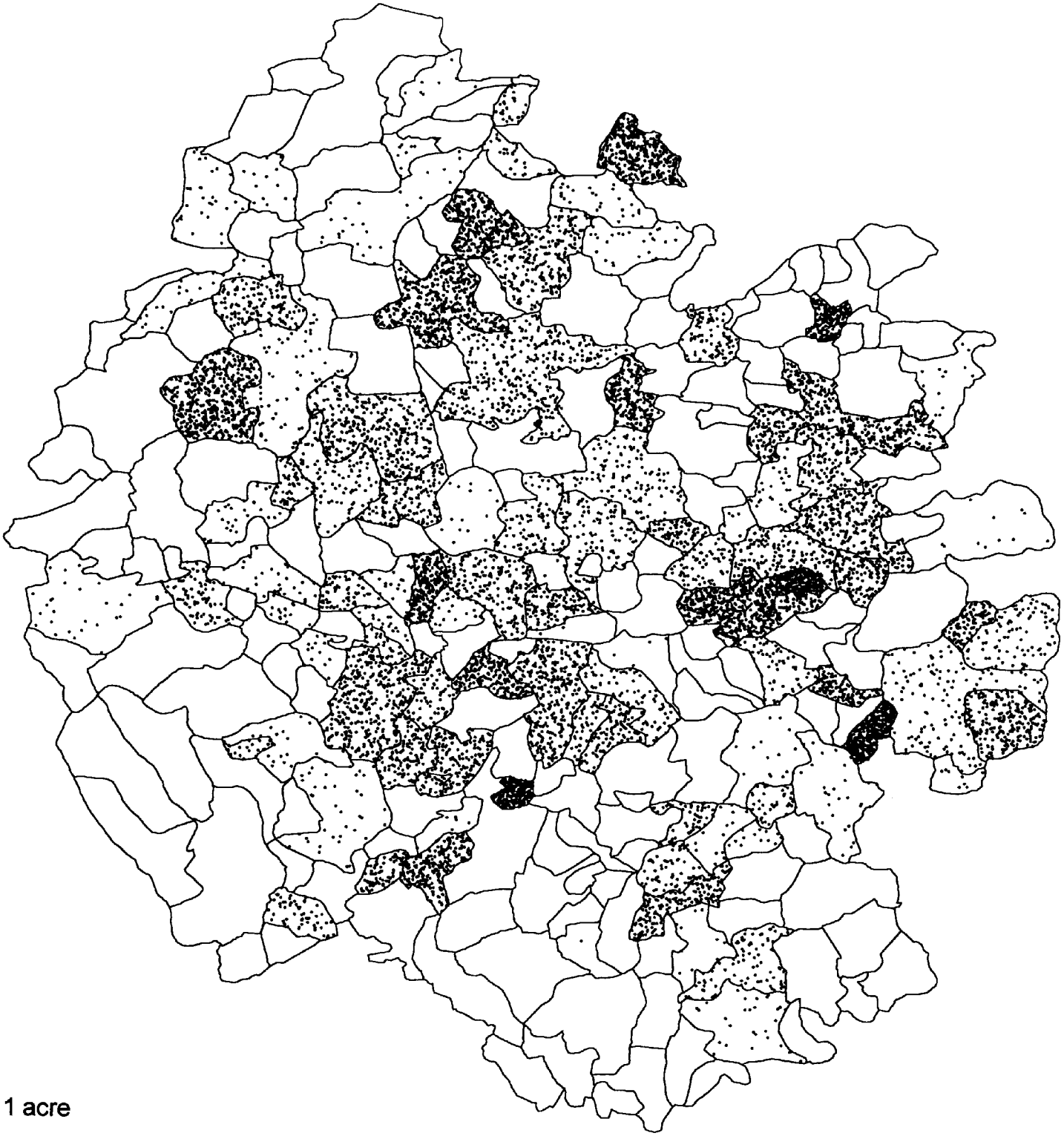
[113] PRO: CP25/1/81/17/12.

[114] PRO: CP25/80/13/267/A

H16: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



H17: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



• 1 acre

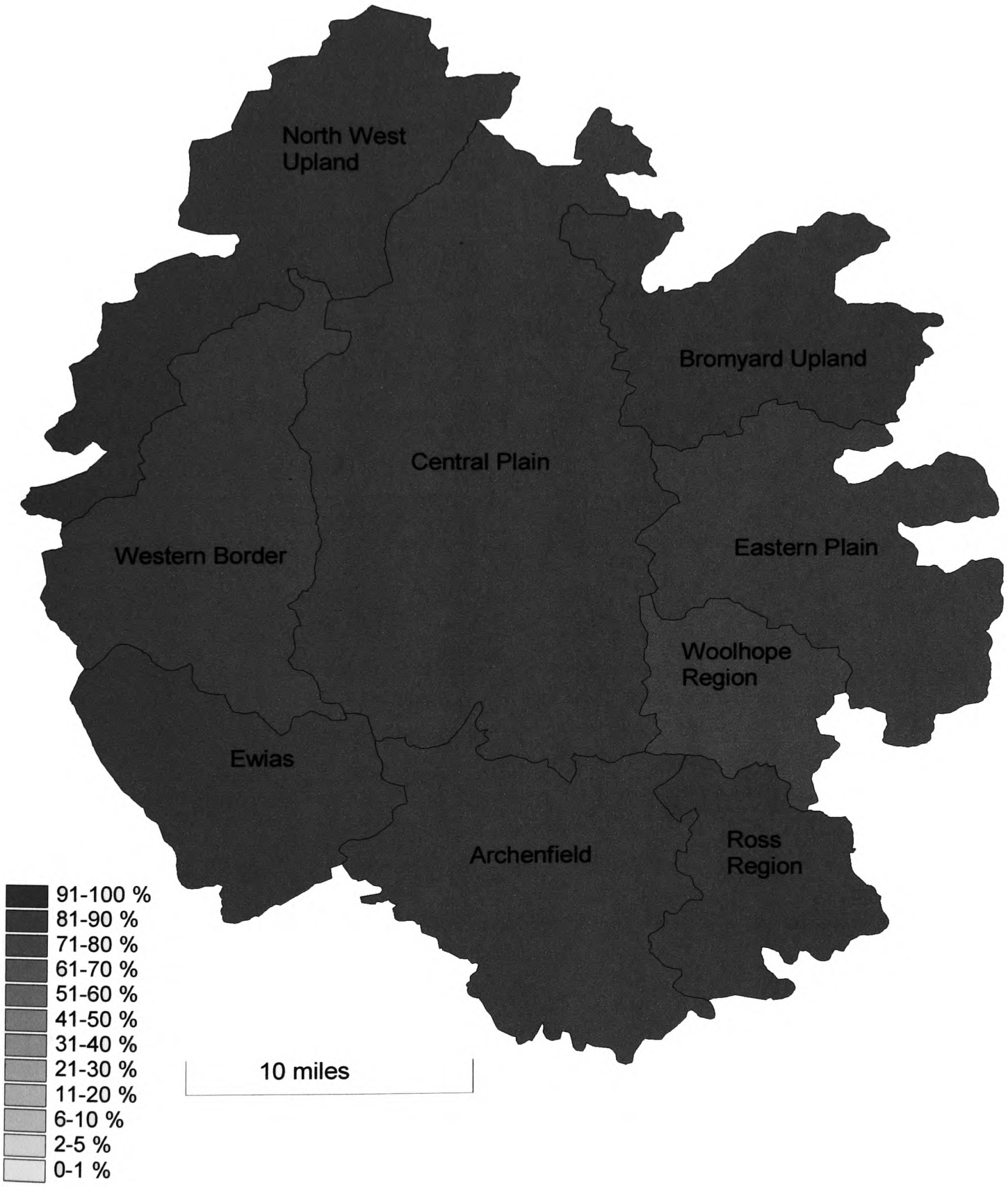
10 miles

now include places such as Clifford in the Western Border region and Knill in the North-West Upland. There is a broader distribution in the northwest as a whole and densities and distribution have expanded in the north of the Central Plain, noticeably around Kingsland, Yarpole, Eye and Little Hereford. There is a small rise in distribution throughout the Bromyard Upland and the Eastern Plain around Bishops Frome. There is some expansion apparent to the east of Hereford so that there are parishes with records of arable almost all the way along the line of the River Wye. The southern part of the Central Plain remains an important district with high densities in Brinsop and its adjacent parishes. There has been some fall in the extent of arable transfers, particularly in the Woolhope Region and southwest Archenfield.

Map H18: Regional percentages, 1303-1352

This map is based on the most wide ranging and accurate dataset in the series. Map H19 below shows that the distribution is at its greatest extent. The North West Upland, the Bromyard Upland and the Ross Region have the highest percentages of arable recorded (all 94%). The North West Upland has six parishes out of 25 with data. This low figure helps explain why an upland region should be among the most important arable regions – three of the parishes with data have records of arable only. The Bromyard Upland has 14 out of 24 parishes with data. Some have very high percentages of arable, such as Tedstone Delamare, Whitbourne and Thornbury. Others, such as Bredenbury, have lower percentages. The data suggests that the upland areas of the county have much less records and, therefore, the parishes with data can affect the overall picture for the

H18: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



region.

Conversely, the Ross Region has a very good set of data with nine out of 13 parishes having transfers associated with them. This suggests that the district around Ross was a more important arable region, at an earlier date, than was suggested by maps H8 to H13 above (in those maps the relatively low percentages of all land types recorded in the region implied that the region was relatively unimportant, agriculturally, until the late fifteenth century). The data for maps H18 and H19 provides a clearer picture because it enables an assessment of the true amount and extent of arable on a regional basis whereas maps H8 to H13, while important in describing relative changes to the amount of transfers over time, could be influenced, to a certain extent, by the size of the region in question when trying to assess changing patterns of land use.

It is interesting to compare the data for the Ross Region with that for the adjacent region of Archenfield (90%). In many ways these regions were closely linked, indeed most of the low-lying land in the two regions was to form one important agricultural district known as the Ryelands (see section 4.1 above). The main difference was the close links that Archenfield retained to Wales and Welsh custom. This factor may help explain why just 14 out of 31 parishes in Archenfield have data in this period in comparison to the much higher percentage for the Ross Region – it is possible that Welsh custom continued to be used in parts of this area.

Ewias (91%) has just two parishes with data and these are both situated between Ewias and the Western Border region, around Wormbridge and Abbey Dore. This again

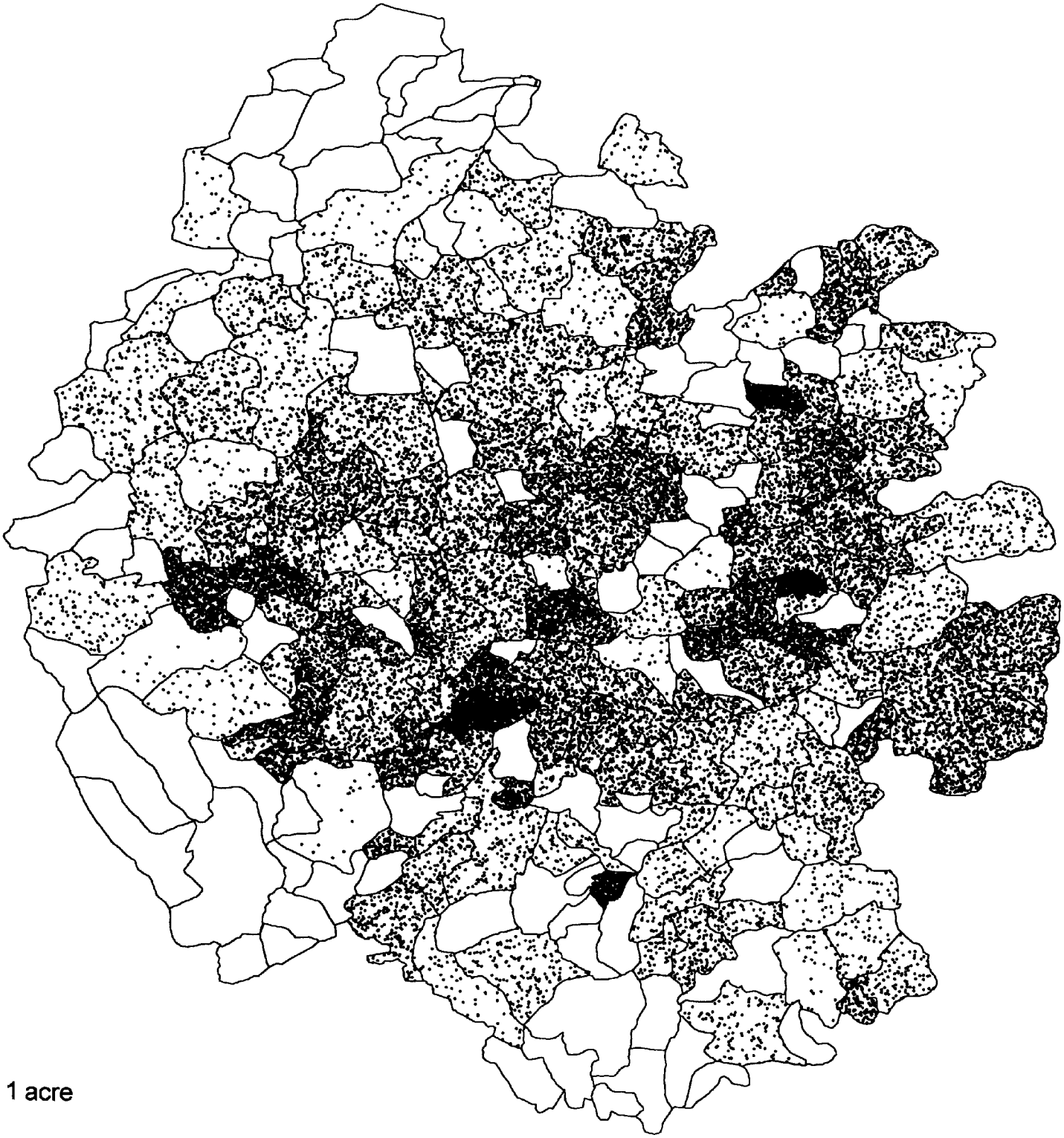
goes to show that there are very limited amounts of data for the extreme upland districts and those with close links to Wales.

The Western Border (88%) has 19 out of 24 parishes with data. Just one of those parishes has arable data only, which suggests that this region had mixed methods of farming during this period. This becomes more apparent when the position of the Central Plain (91%) is considered. On the Plain, 51 out of 68 parishes have data from this period. Seven of these parishes have records involving arable only and many others have very high percentages of arable, notably Bullingham, Clehonger and Bodenham. This suggests that the Central Plain was a very important arable district, comparable with the Ross Region.

The Eastern Plain has 23 out of 26 parishes with data representing another very good dataset. The main reason for its comparatively low percentage of arable (85%) is due to one fine, issued in 1344, which records the transfer of part of a Knight's Fee in Ashperton from John de Pendock de Sutton to Roger Atte Boure de Checkley. Without this transfer of unspecified land the percentage of arable would have been noticeably higher.

The Woolhope Region has some very interesting evidence. Ten out of its 12 parishes have records of transfers and the overall percentage of 81% is the lowest of all the regions. The Woolhope Dome is a very distinctive feature with a landscape consisting of alternating scarps and valleys (see section 4.1 above). It is possible that the varied landscape of this district encouraged mixed farming methods at an earlier date than in other areas. An example of the type of transaction involving a variety of land types

H19: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



• 1 acre

10 miles

apparent in this region at this time occurs in 1338 when Thomas de la Barre obtained eight carucates of arable, 50 acres of meadow, seven acres of pasture and 80 acres of wood in Woolhope and its surrounding parishes, from John de la Barre.[115] There is also evidence of transactions where land types other than arable are more prominent in this region; in 1308 Roger de Chaundos obtained 40 acres of arable and 50 acres of wood in Fownhope and Mordiford from Hugh Eliot de Hereford.[116]

Map H19: Distribution, 1303-1352

This map, along with map H18, represents a period in which more Herefordshire fines were issued than at any other time in the medieval period (see tables H9 and H10 above). Densities are consequently higher than the other maps. Distribution has also expanded over map H17. Ewias is the only region with negligible records of arable. Parishes in the extreme north and south of the county also have little or no arable mentioned. There has been an increase in transactions on the Eastern Plain, and in the Woolhope Region, Ross Region and northern Archenfield. Parishes on the Central Plain with no data now stand out, most noticeably around Felton and Ullingswick near the Bromyard Upland region. There has been an increase in the southern part of the Bromyard Upland, but overall distribution is patchy in this region. This map suggests that the most important areas of arable conveyances are concentrated on the Central Plain and Eastern Plain.

[115] PRO: CP25/1/82/40/99

[116] PRO: CP25/1/82/28/12

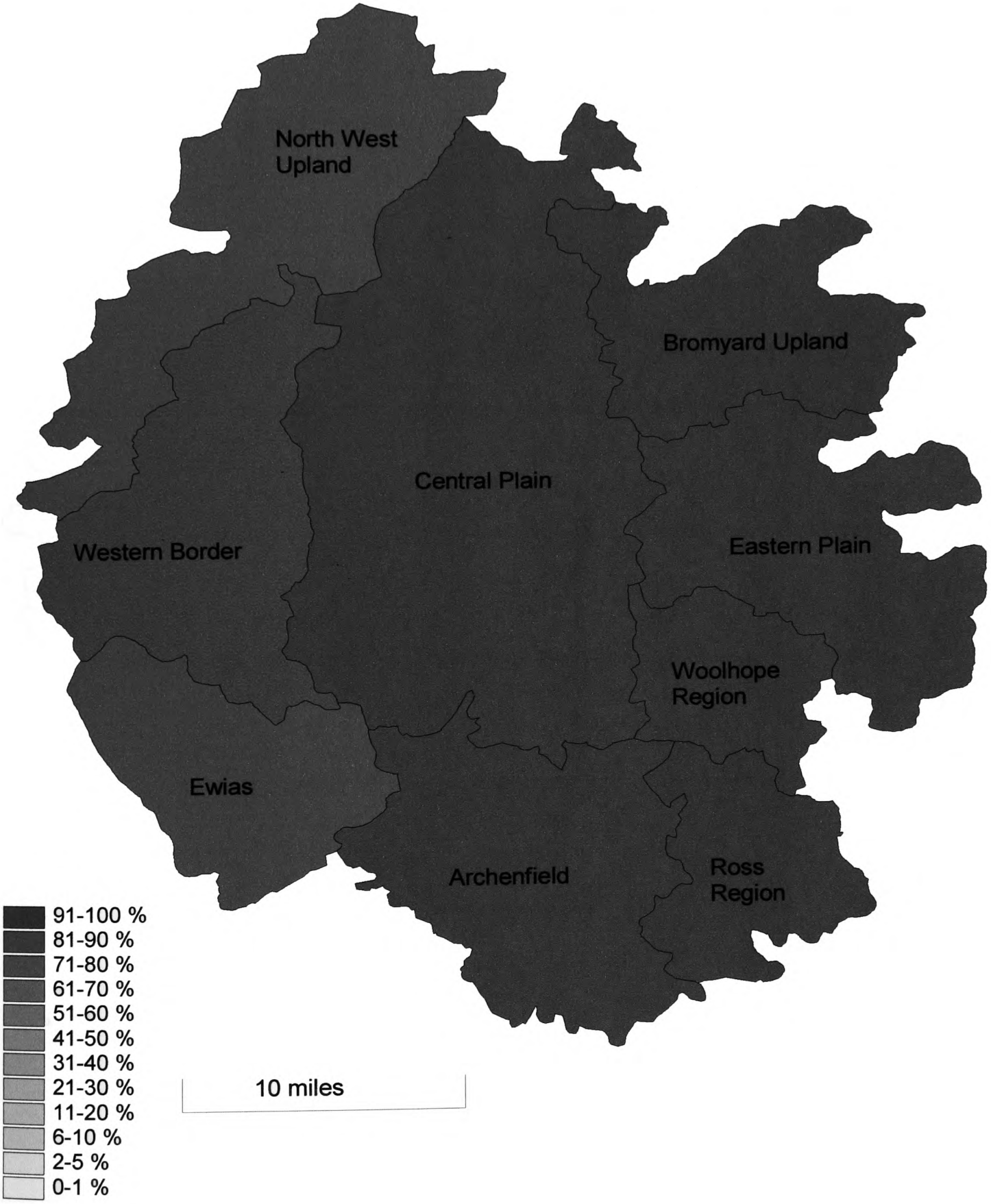
Map H20: Regional percentages, 1353-1404

The most noticeable facet of this map is the difference between the three most westerly regions of Herefordshire and the rest of the county. The western regions all have percentages below 90% with the Western Border having the lowest figure, 83%. The other regions range from 90-95%. A process seems to have emerged in the fourteenth century whereby the western districts, particularly the Western Border, have more transactions involving a mixture of land types than the Central Plain for example. This may be indicative of a tendency towards more mixed farming methods in these regions, probably influenced by their situation on the Welsh border. It is possible that the Woolhope Region (90%) was another district of more mixed agriculture, although the evidence from this map is less compelling than the previous one, this could be due to the lack of evidence for this region in comparison to the previous period with only half of the parishes in the region containing data.

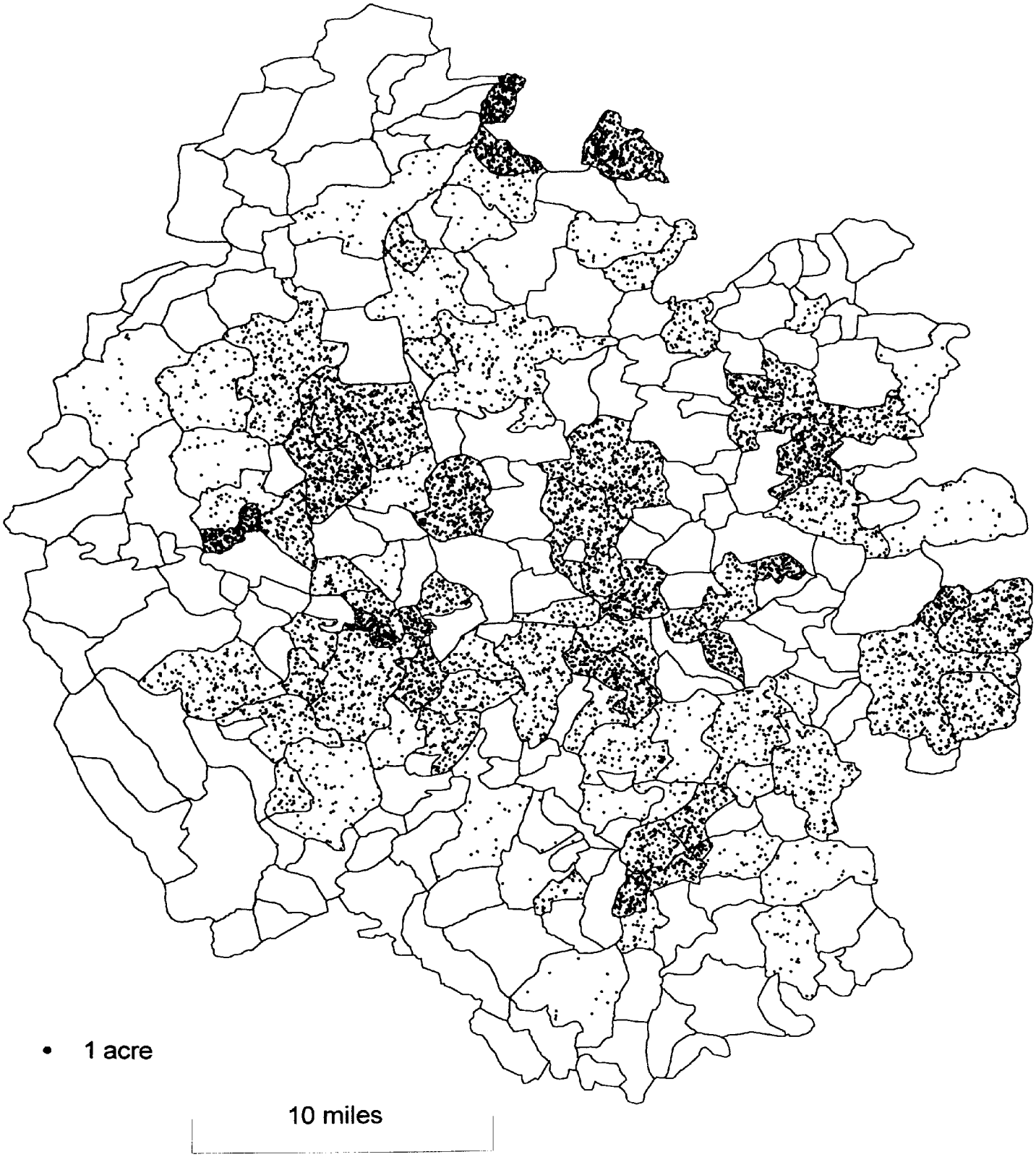
Map H21: Distribution, 1353-1404

The main feature of this map in comparison with H19 is the dramatic break up of the Central Plain, which is now fragmented between north and south. There are still important arable clusters to the west of Hereford, towards the Golden Valley, to the north of Hereford, around Bodenham and Marden but there is a group of parishes between Hereford and Leominster with no record of arable transactions. The Eastern Plain has also become fragmented with records largely limited to the extreme east around Ledbury. The Woolhope Region seems less affected along with the Ross Region. This may show the

H20: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



H21: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404

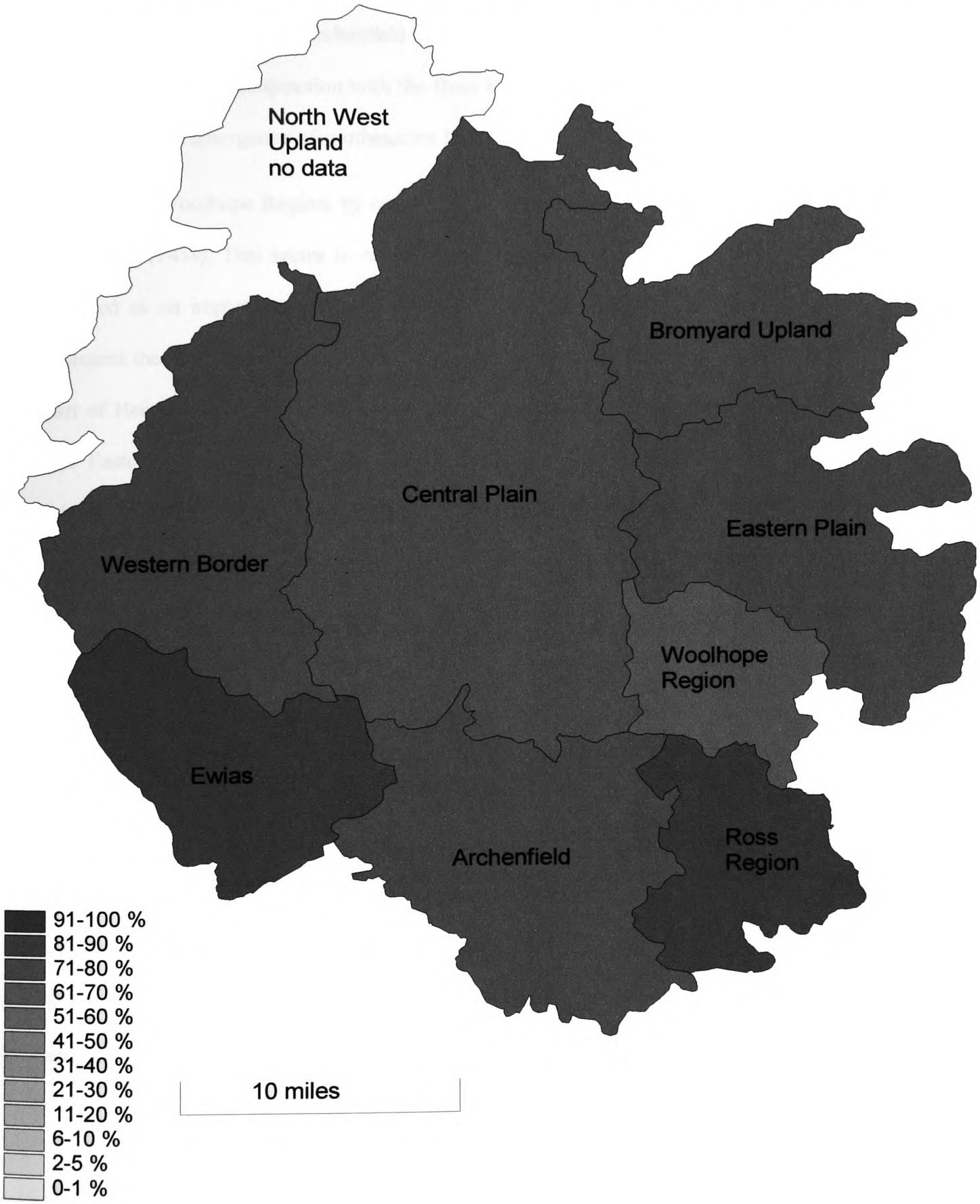


continued rise of southeastern Herefordshire as a very important arable district. Another area showing increased levels of activity is based around the parish Weobley between the Central Plain and the Western Border. The fall in the number of fines issued during this period may be linked to the dramatic fall in population following the famines of the early fourteenth century and the Black Death a generation later. The need for large amounts of arable to feed the population was less important, there was a smaller and more mobile labour force and there was a rise in more mixed farming. The map also appears to show increased levels of activity around the major towns of the county: Hereford itself and Leominster on the Central Plain, Ledbury on the Eastern Plain and Bromyard in the Bromyard Upland region. Weobley, between the Central Plain and the Western Border, was to emerge from the medieval period as a very important town and the town of Ross was at the centre of another important arable region. There are some high densities of arable recorded in Little Hereford and Richard's Castle (Shropshire border parishes) near the town of Ludlow.

Map H22: Regional percentages, 1405-1455

There are some very significant changes apparent in this map. Firstly, the adjacent Ross and Woolhope regions have emerged as very distinctive areas for very different reasons. The Ross Region (96%) has a notably higher percentage of arable recorded than any other region. This appears to be the culmination of a subtle process, which had been occurring in the fourteenth century, whereby the Ross Region was becoming the most important arable district in Herefordshire. This situation is emphasized in this map by the

H22: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



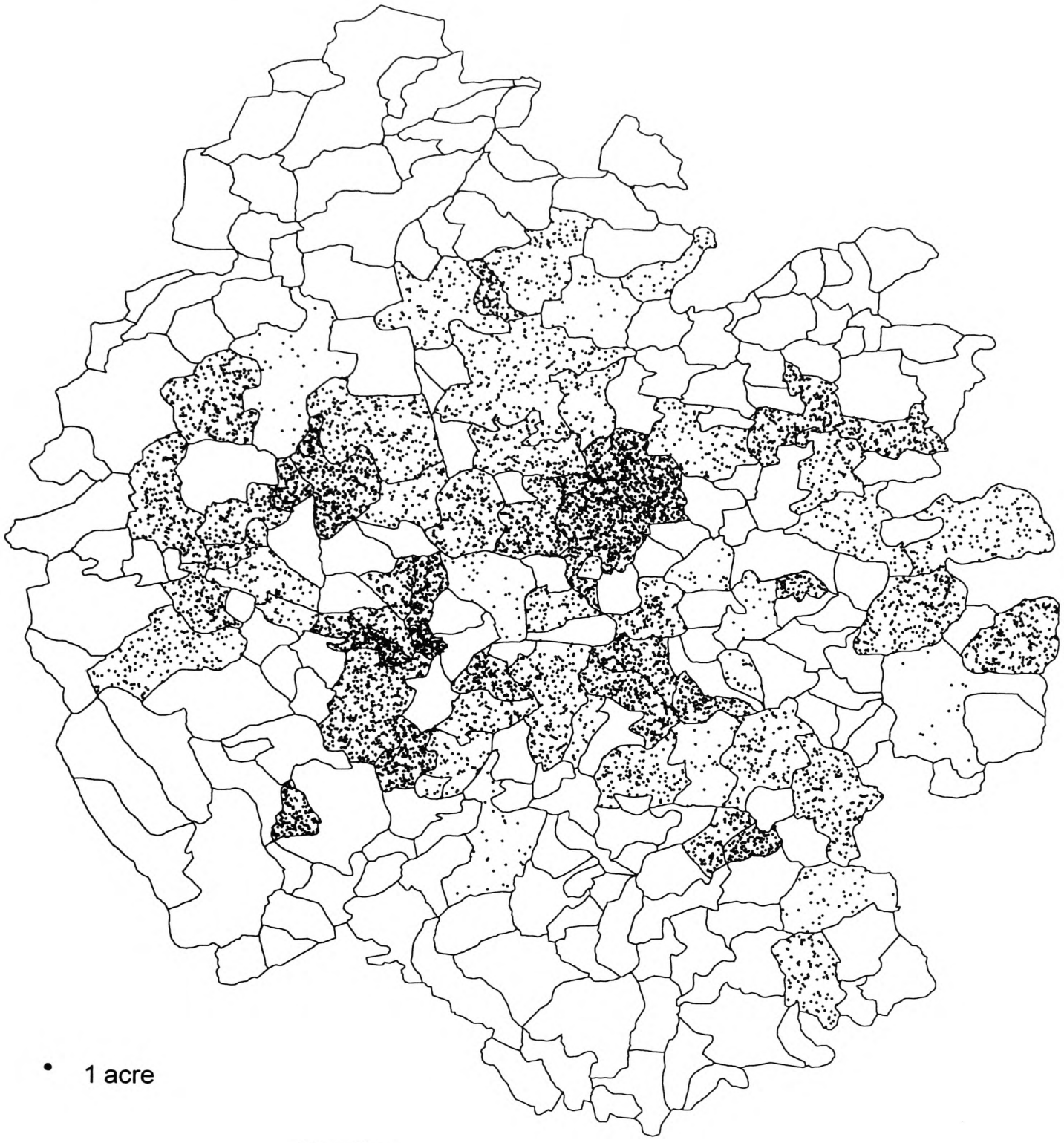
fall in the percentage of arable recorded on the Central Plain (83%) and the Eastern Plain (87%). It also appears that Archenfield (90%) may have been developing its status as a key arable district in conjunction with the Ross Region. In other words, this map appears indicative of the emergence of southeastern Herefordshire as the primary arable district.

The Woolhope Region, by contrast, has by far the lowest percentage of arable in this period (74%). This seems to reinforce the suggestion, made earlier, that the district emerged as an important mixed-farming area in the medieval period. This region may represent the hub of a more widespread process that was occurring throughout the central part of Herefordshire as traditionally important arable districts, such as the Central Plain and Eastern Plain, started to adopt more mixed farming methods and, consequently, transfers of meadow and pasture increase in the fines leading to a lowering in the percentage of arable recorded. The Western Border seems relatively unaffected by this process; indeed the percentage of arable recorded in this region is seen to increase in this period. It seems likely that this region had always been one of mixed agriculture and was, therefore, less affected by the changes apparent in other areas in the late medieval period.

Map H23: Distribution 1405-1455

This map shows further constriction of the distribution of arable towards the centre of the Central Plain. The arable clusters represented in map H21 are still apparent with the exception of the group of parishes near Ludlow. Indeed, almost all of the border parishes in the north, west and south of the county have no records of arable. Transfers of arable are primarily located on the Central and Eastern Plains, the southern part of the Bromyard

H23: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



Upland, the Woolhope Region, parts of the Ross Region and a relatively small section of the Western Border.

Map H24: Regional percentages, 1456-1507

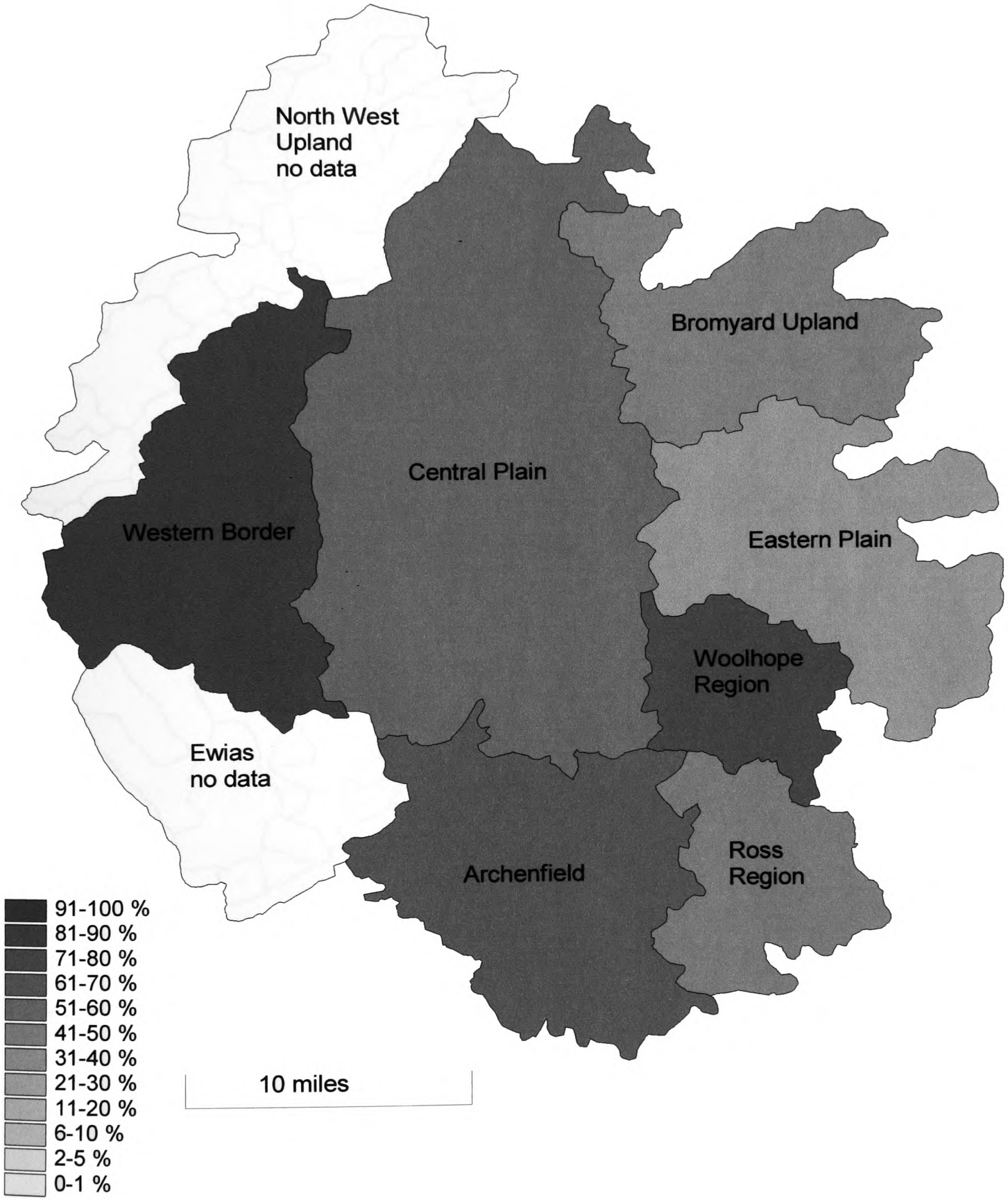
There were only 38 fines issued during this period with records of land transfers and, therefore, it is more difficult to make qualitative assessments because of the lack of data. There is very little data for the west of the county. The relatively high percentage recorded on the Western Border is due to just two transactions, both of which occurred within the parish of Pembridge in 1456 and 1479: the first involved the transfer of 40 acres of arable in Bury and Weston (Westonbury and Weston in Pembridge) from Thomas Lucas and his wife Katrina to Richard Haukyns and John Hogges.[117] The second involved John Longe and his wife Joan, who obtained 26 acres of arable and four acres of meadow in Lowe (Pembridge), from John Payn and his wife Juliana.[118]

Furthermore, just 18 out of the 68 parishes on the Central Plain have any transactions associated with them. What is clear, however, is the continued drop in the percentage of arable recorded overall with the Eastern Plain, for example, having just 43% recorded. There is some evidence to suggest that Archenfield was developing further as an important arable district with a figure of 76%. Map H25 below reveals the key parishes where the most transfers were occurring at this time.

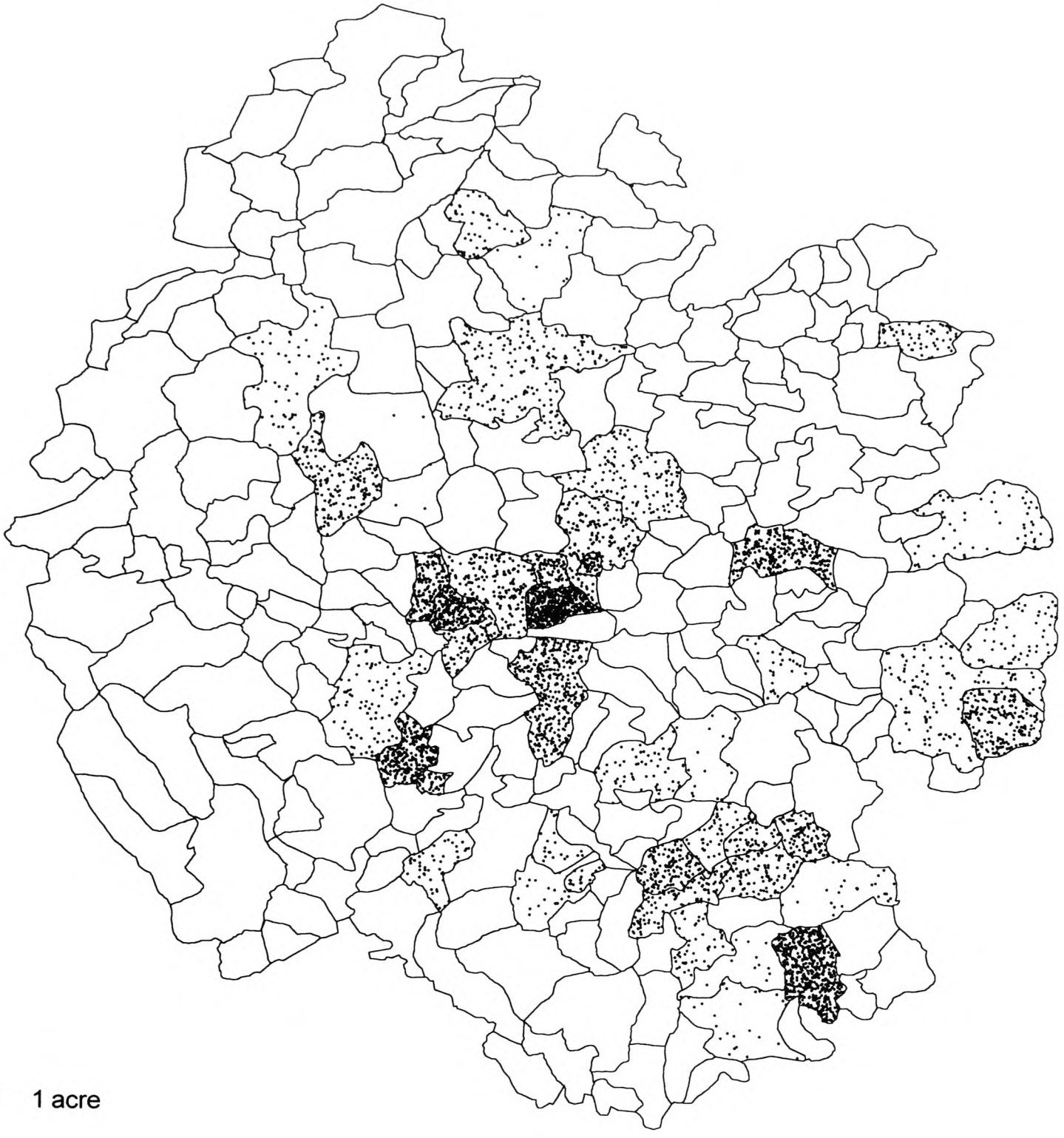
[117] PRO: CP25/1/83/56/74/B.

[118] PRO: CP25/1/83/57/13.

H24: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507.



H25: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507.



• 1 acre

10 miles

Map H25: Distribution, 1456-1507

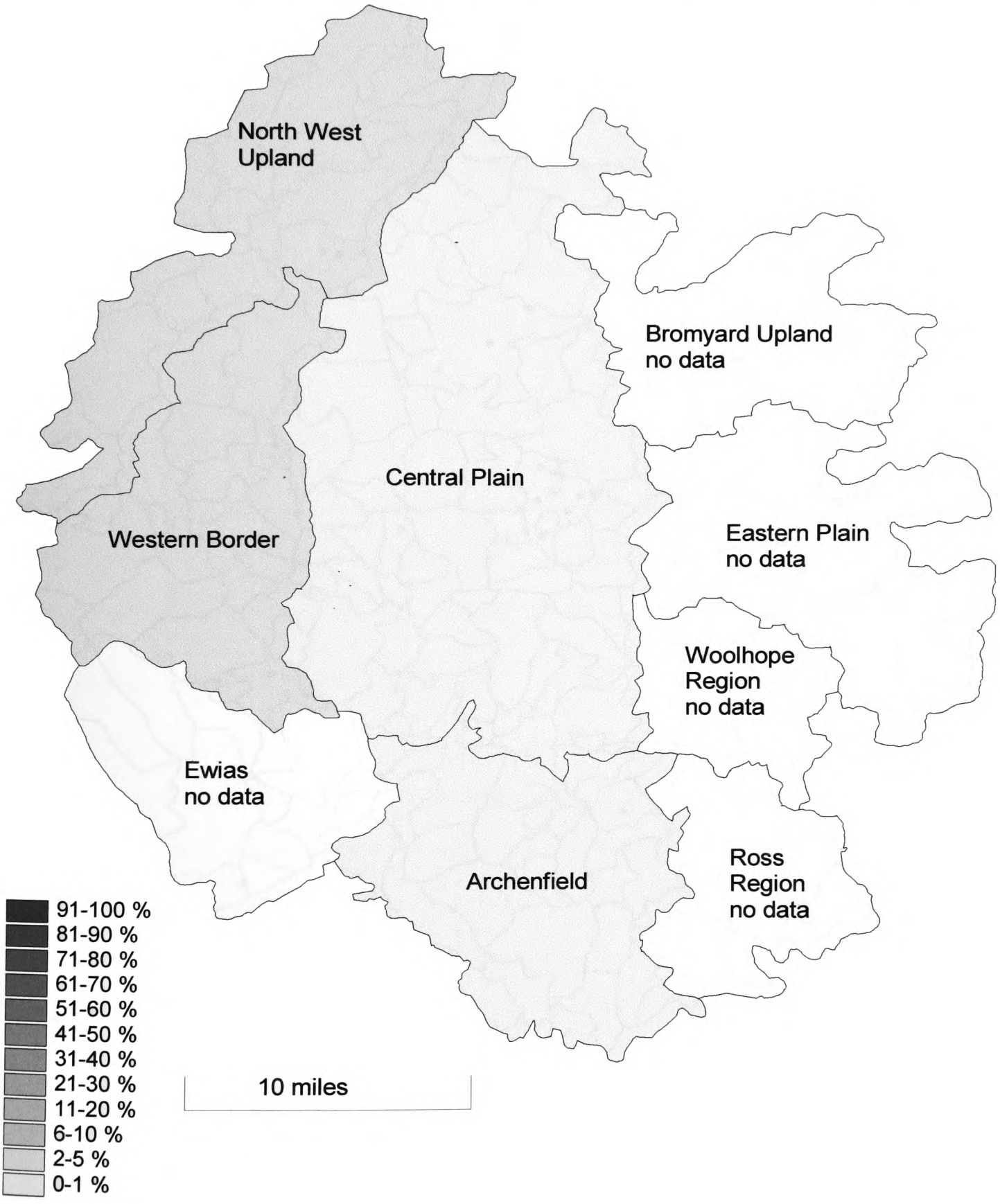
The final arable map in this series shows distribution at its most restricted. It appears to show the continued emergence of the Ross Region as perhaps the most important arable district in terms of number of parishes that contain records of arable transfers. There is also some evidence of a rise in arable transfers in northern Archenfield. The Central Plain still has large concentrations of transfers, but these are primarily restricted to a narrow belt of parishes between Hereford and Leominster. There are virtually no transfers of arable recorded in the whole of the western part of the county, with the exception of Pembridge and some adjacent parishes in the western part of the Central Plain. The only records in the Bromyard Upland are in Tedstone Delamare and on the Eastern Plain they are restricted to the parishes around Ledbury and to a large concentration at Much Cowarne. There is also a lack of data for the middle of the Woolhope Region. This map, in conjunction with map H24 above, seems to indicate a fall in the importance of arable on a county and a move towards more mixed farming.

4.6(iv) Changes in meadow and pasture over time.

Map H26: Regional percentages, 1199-1250

As can be seen in map H27 below, records of meadow and pasture are very limited in this period. The only regions with data are the North West Upland (2.5%), the Western Border (2.5%), the Central Plain (0.5%) and Archenfield (0.5%). It is interesting that the

H26: Regional percentages meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



H27: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.

• 1 acre

10 miles

western districts have notably higher percentages of meadow and pasture than the Central Plain. Even though the records are limited to a few transactions it seems significant that there are more transfers on the Western Border, for example, than the Central Plain which has considerably more parishes. This appears to suggest that the western districts were more likely to have been involved in pastoral farming methods than elsewhere in the county. This is likely because these districts were near the Welsh border and were influenced both culturally and physically by their situation. Furthermore, the River Wye, running through the Western Border, would have provided extensive amounts of ideal grazing land.

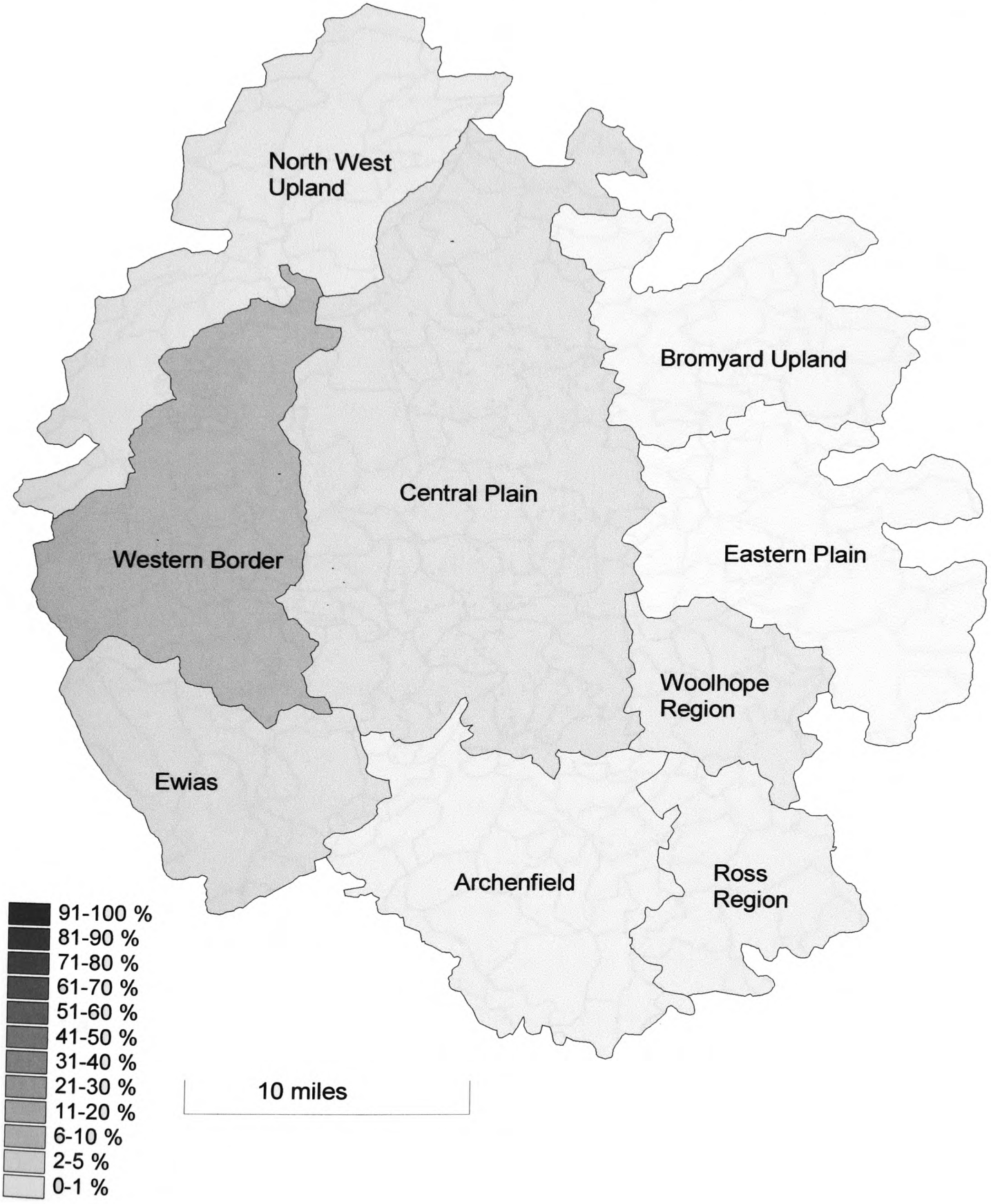
Map H27: Distribution, 1199-1250

The most significant cluster is in the parish of Marden, north of Hereford, on the Central Plain. However, the records in Vowchurch and Sarnesfield on the Western Border reveal this region to be more significant in percentage terms (see map H26 above).

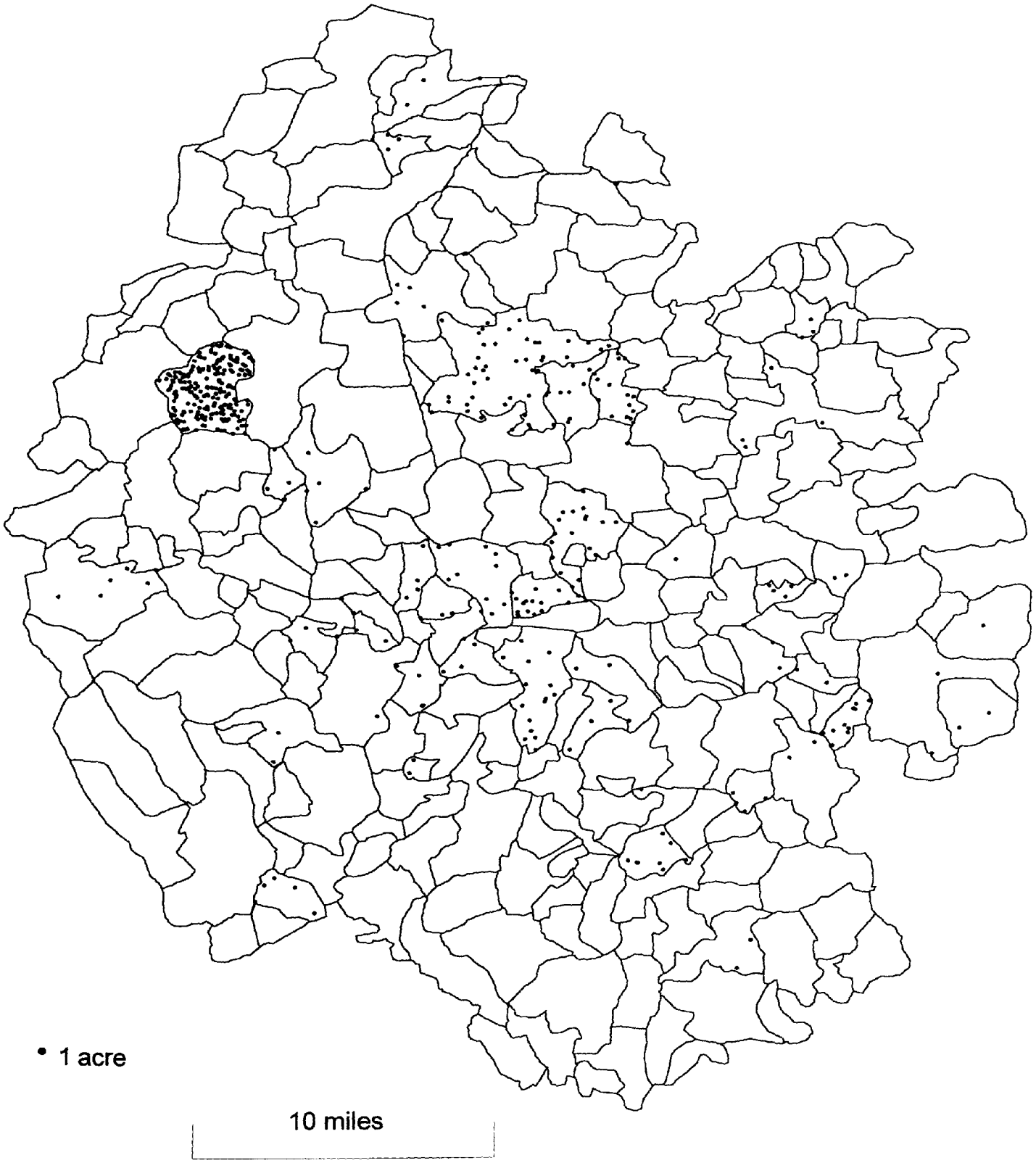
Map H28: Regional percentages, 1251-1302

This map reveals, with greater certainty, the west and particularly the Western Border, as the most important area for the amounts of meadow and pasture conveyed. At 18% the Western Border stands out as the region with by far the highest percentage of this land type recorded. Ewias and the Central Plain are the next highest regions, both with 3%. All the regions have some record of transfers of this land type: the North West Upland (2%), Woolhope (2%), Archenfield (1.5%), Ross Region (1.5%), Bromyard

H28: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



H29: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



Upland (1%) and the Eastern Plain (0.5%).

Map H29: Distribution, 1251-1302

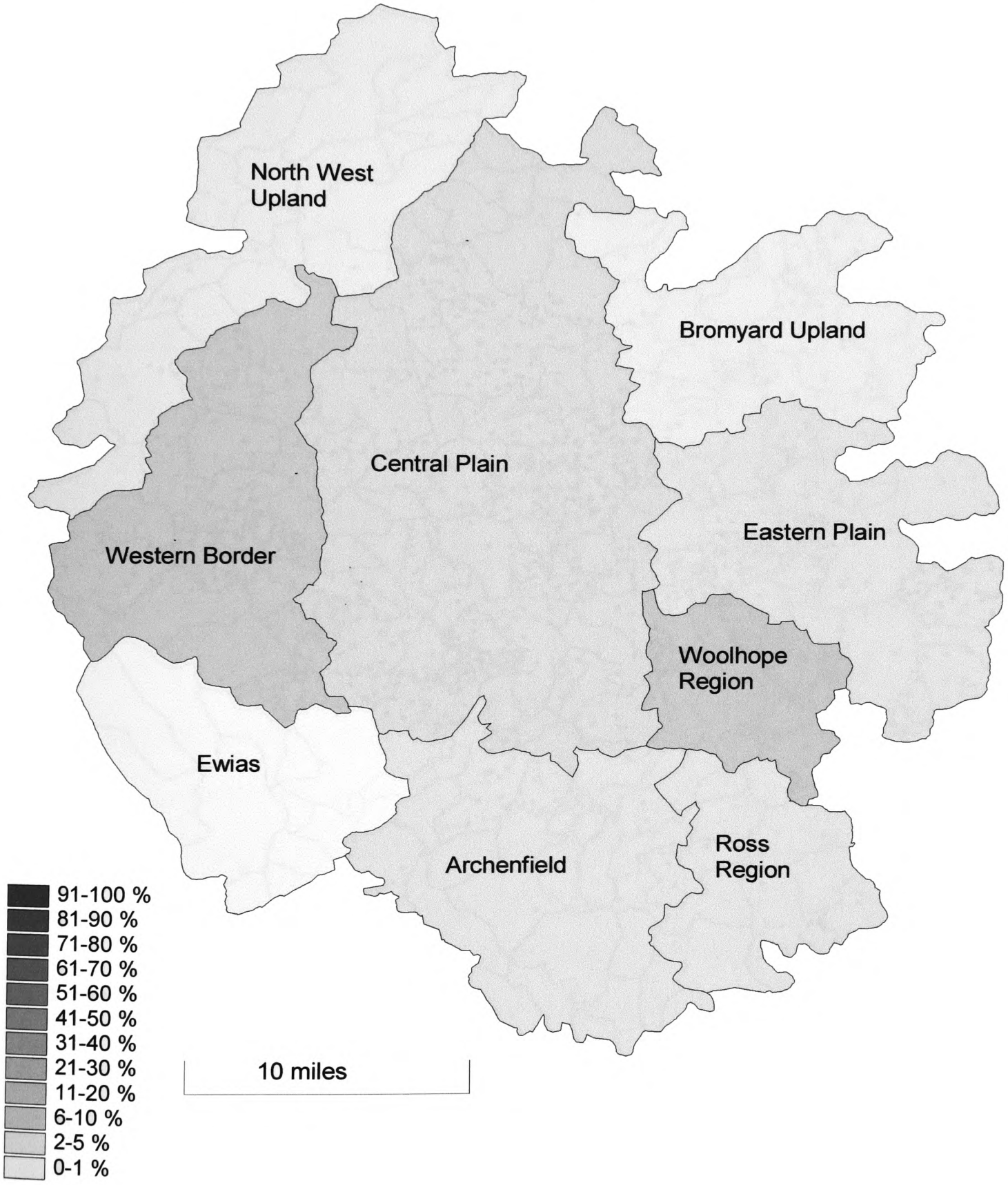
This map reveals a cluster in the parish of Lyonshall on the Western Border. There are other parishes in this region with records of meadow and pasture, notably Vowchurch and Sarnesfield (two key parishes in records of these land types recorded in the previous period). However, the large acreage conveyed in Lyonshall is largely responsible for the high percentage recorded for the Western Border in map H28. The records for Lyonshall are mainly from the transaction between Walter Deverous and William Waldebeouf mentioned in relation to map H16 above.[119] In this transaction, which occurred in 1275, William received four carucates of arable, 20 acres of meadow, 200 acres of wood and 200 acres of pasture from Walter. Records of meadow and pasture are more evenly distributed on the Central Plain although they are mainly concentrated in the parishes around Hereford and Leominster.

Map H30: Regional percentages, 1303-1352

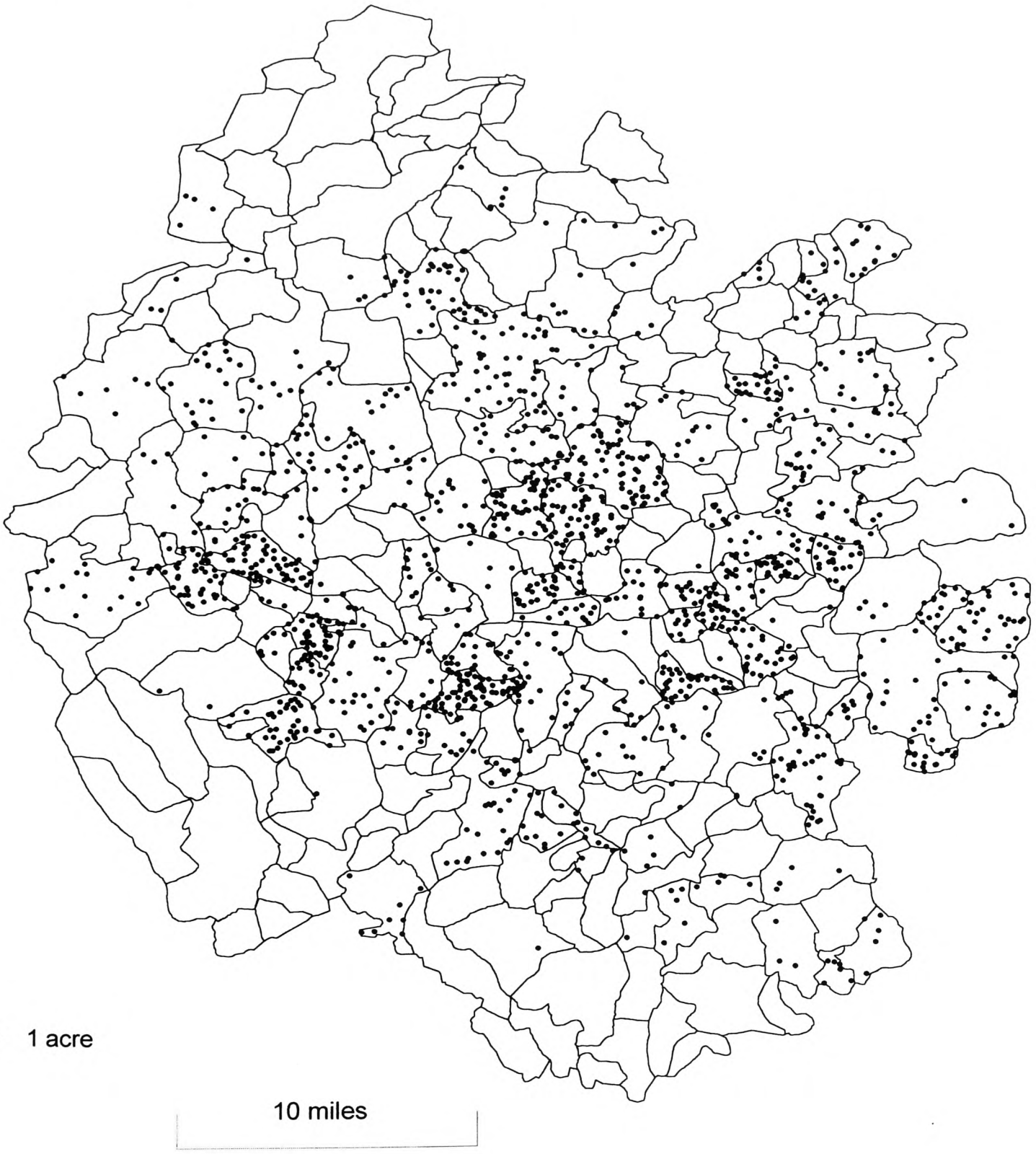
This map continues to reveal the Western Border as a more significant region, in terms of transfers of meadow and pasture, than the Central Plain although the difference is less acute with the Western Border at 6% and the Central Plain at 5%. The emergence of the Woolhope Region is very interesting as this small region has the highest percentage of meadow and pasture during this period (7.5%). The adjacent Ross Region and Archenfield have similar percentages, around 3.5%, the Eastern Plain also has records of about that

[119] PRO: CP25/1/81/17/12.

H30: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



H31: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



amount, the North West Upland and Bromyard Upland are both at 3% and Ewias has just 0.7%.

Overall, the map reveals a distinct change in the situation recorded in the previous maps relating to these land types. The dominance of the Western Border has waned. Most of the regions have similar percentages recorded but the small Woolhope Region appears to be leading the way in a change towards transfers involving a range of land types on a countywide basis.

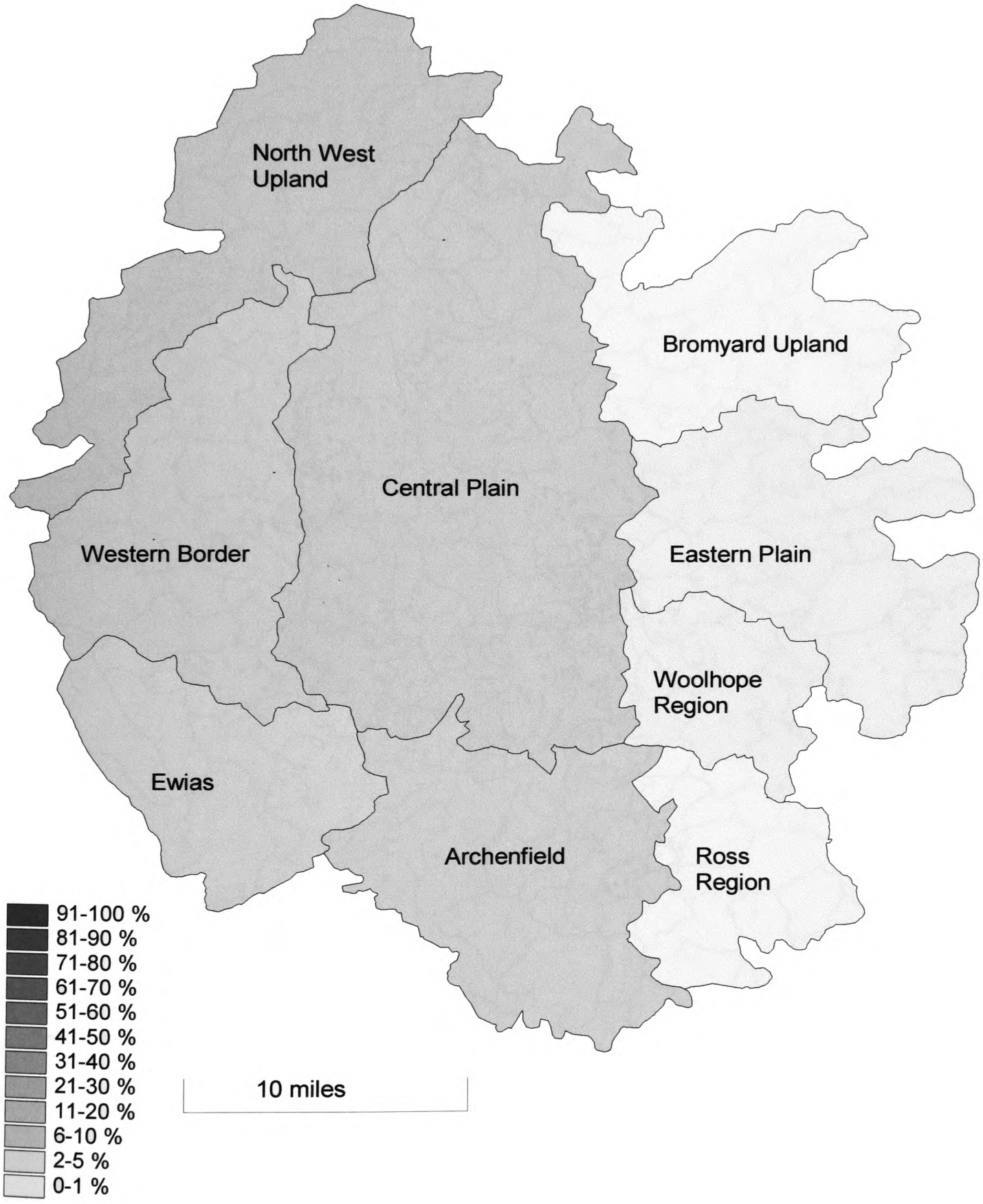
Map H31: Distribution, 1303-1352

This map shows a distinct rise in the amount of meadow and pasture recorded and in its distribution. Transfers are fairly evenly spaced throughout all the Regions with the exception of the North-West Upland, Ewias and southern Archenfield. There is an interesting cluster apparent in the parish of Breinton, adjacent to Hereford. The reasonably even spread of these land types confirms the picture, apparent in map H30, that transfers were increasing on a county-wide basis at this time.

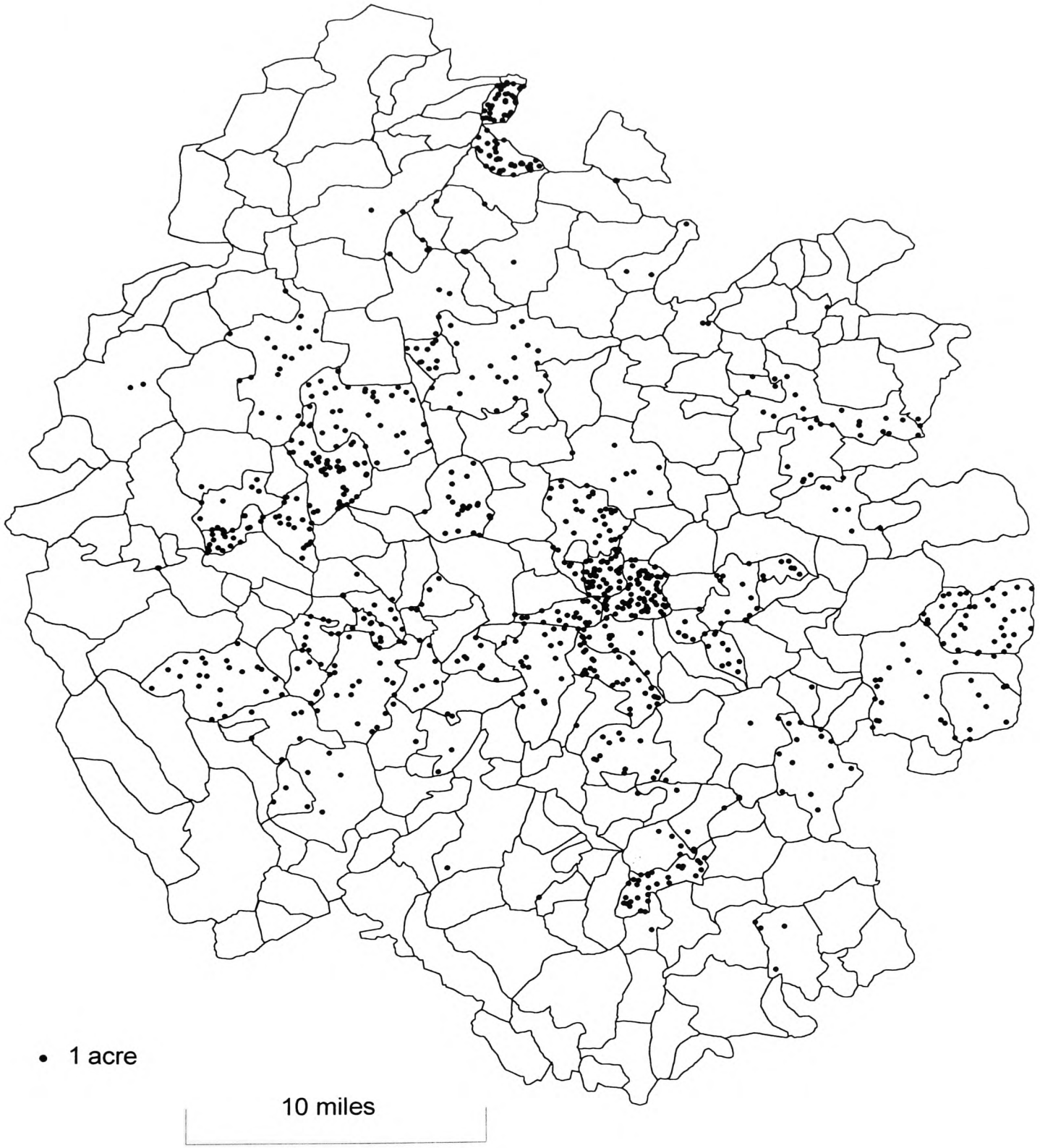
Map H32: Regional percentages, 1353-1404

There is a very distinct pattern apparent in this map with the central and western regions of the county having similar amounts of pasture and meadow recorded: between 6.5% (Ewias) and 10.5% (North West Upland). In contrast, the eastern regions have percentages below 5.5%. The map represents something of a return to the situation apparent in the thirteenth century with the western regions the most significant in terms of

H32: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



H33: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



meadow and pasture recorded. The main difference apparent is that there seems to have been a slight move eastwards with the Central Plain and Archenfield having similar percentages to the Western Border – a change that may have begun in the previous period when the Central Plain and Western Border again had similar percentage figures. Somewhat surprising is the lack of data for the Woolhope Region which is so significant in the previous and the following periods (see maps H30 and H34).

Map H33: Distribution, 1353-1404

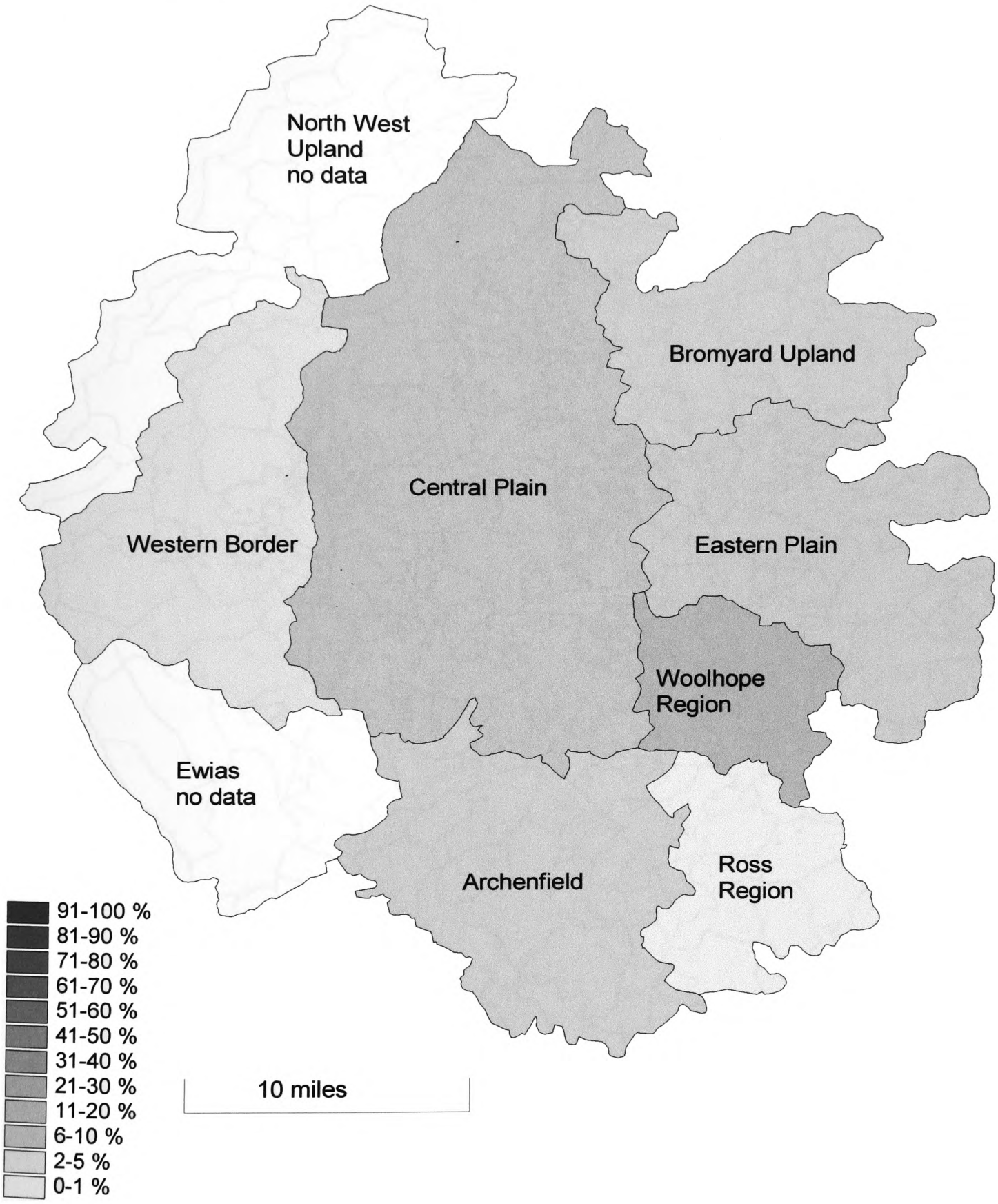
There is a fall in the overall amount of meadow and pasture transferred although regional distribution is similar to the previous period (see map H31). A noticeable cluster is apparent at Richards Castle, near Ludlow, primarily associated with a transaction of 1378 in which John Kypeston, John Pieros, Roger Nasshe and Nicholas Aenenes, through their attorney, William de Horneby, obtained 220 acres of arable, 20 acres of meadow, 15 acres of pasture and a messuage in Richards Castle, from John Dorpete and his wife Juliana.

There has been a noticeable fall in the amount of transactions in the north of the Bromyard Upland region. Perhaps the most distinctive grouping is in three parishes to the northeast of Hereford: Holmer, Withington and Sutton St. Nicholas. There is also a band following the Wye valley, west from Hereford, towards the Welsh border.

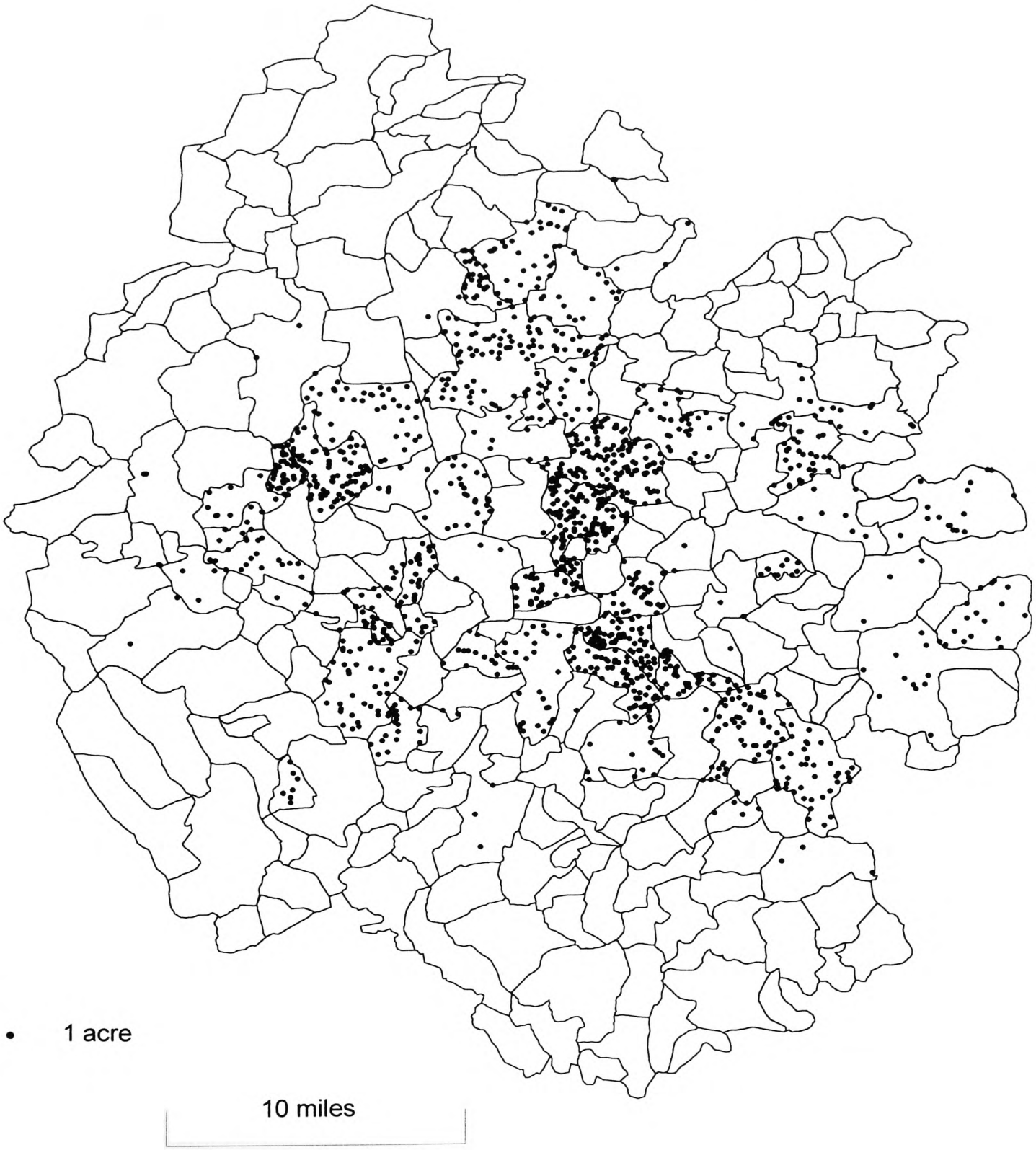
Map H34: Regional percentages, 1405-1455

In comparison to map H32 there is little pattern apparent. Closer examination of

H34: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



H35: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



the data reveals that there is a general rise in the amount of meadow and pasture recorded in relation to other land types. The exception is the Western Border (6.5%). This is interesting because this region, until this period, had consistently high percentages of these land types recorded. The Central Plain (14%), and Eastern Plain (10.5%), traditionally important arable regions, have emerged as having significantly greater percentages meadow and pasture conveyed than in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The most interesting feature of this map, as in map H30, is the very high percentage recorded in the Woolhope Region (21%). This is indicative of the distinctive nature of this small region, the population of which seems to have been experimenting with a variety of farming methods throughout the medieval period.

Overall, the map reveals an important rise in the percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the centre and east of the county. The lack of data for Ewias and the North West Upland and the dramatic fall in the status of the Western Border in terms of transfers of these land types appears symptomatic of a general trend whereby the traditional arable areas, such as the Central Plain and the Eastern Plain, were undergoing a change towards a more mixed type of farming, whereas the regions already associated with pastoralism from an earlier date remained much more stable. The low figure associated with the Ross Region (4%) is, perhaps, indicative of this region's rise to prominence in terms of arable production discussed in relation to map H22 above.

Map H35: Distribution, 1405-1455

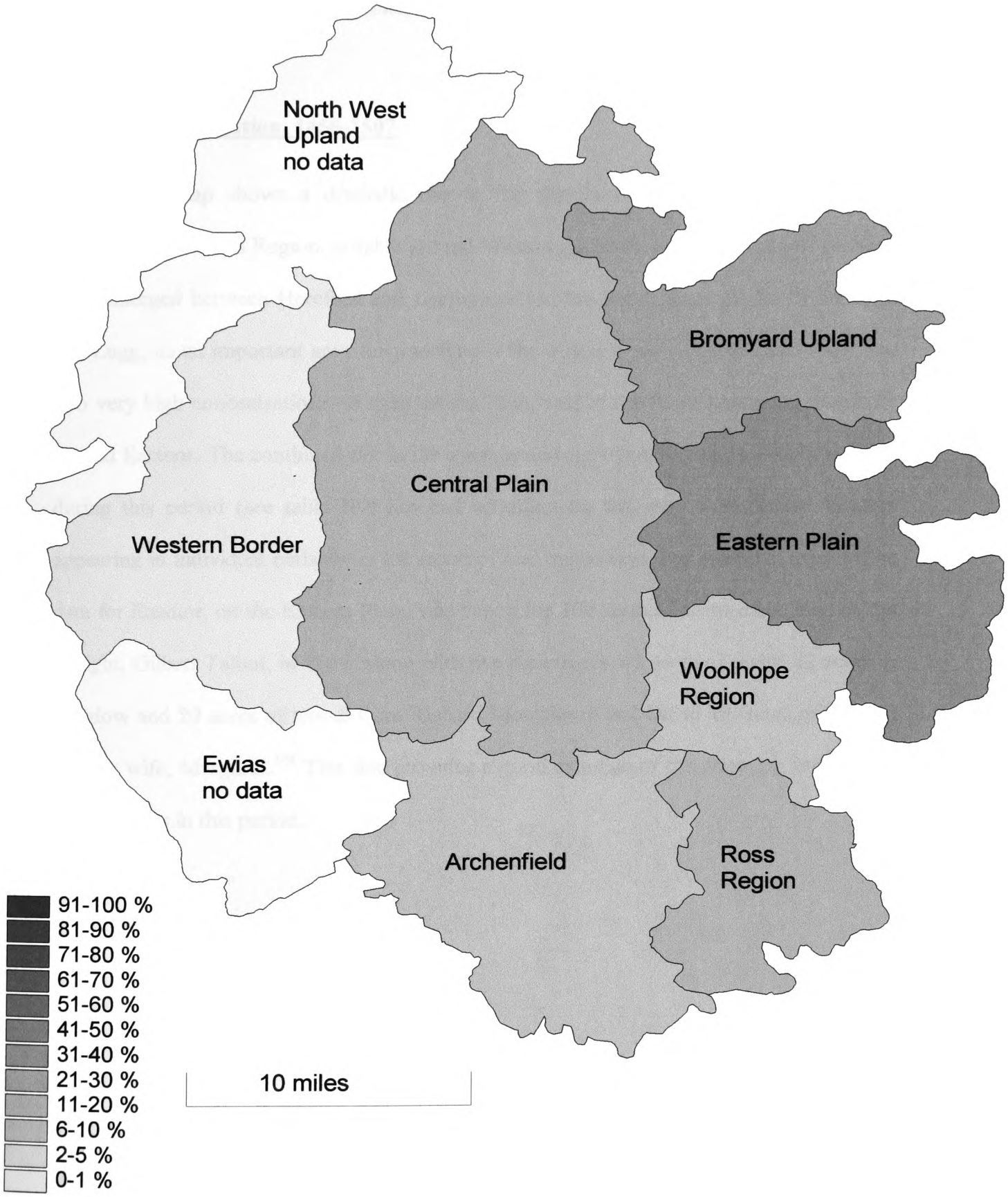
The overall pattern is similar to the previous map although it is becoming apparent

that transfers of meadow and pasture were largely restricted to the Central and Eastern Plains. High concentrations appear to the northeast of Hereford, this time in the parishes of Marden and Bodenham, and there is another concentration to the east of Hereford, centred on Lugwardine. This map, along with maps H34, H37 and H38, relate to the dramatic rise in the average acreage of pasture and meadow recorded in fines in the fifteenth century (see also tables H9 and H10 and graph H3).

Map H36: Regional percentages, 1456-1507

This map continues to record the trend towards a rise in the records of meadow and pasture in the east of the county, particularly in the districts formerly associated with wide scale arable production. The amount of these land types transferred now rivals the percentages of arable in some districts. For example, on the Eastern Plain the figure has reached 41%. There are hardly any records of transfers of meadow or pasture in the three western border regions. The fall in the status of the Woolhope Region (16.5%), apparent here, may be indicative of a situation where it was at the forefront of changes towards more mixed farming, in the east of the county, at an earlier date than the other regions which were still going through a period of flux in the fifteenth century. This scenario may also help explain the relatively high percentage recorded in the Ross Region (27.5%) in comparison to map H34; it is possible that this region was experiencing the type of changes that had begun, in the traditionally arable regions, at an earlier date. In other words, it was being influenced, to a lesser degree, by the changes towards more mixed farming methods which had been advancing, at pace in certain regions, since the late

H36: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507.



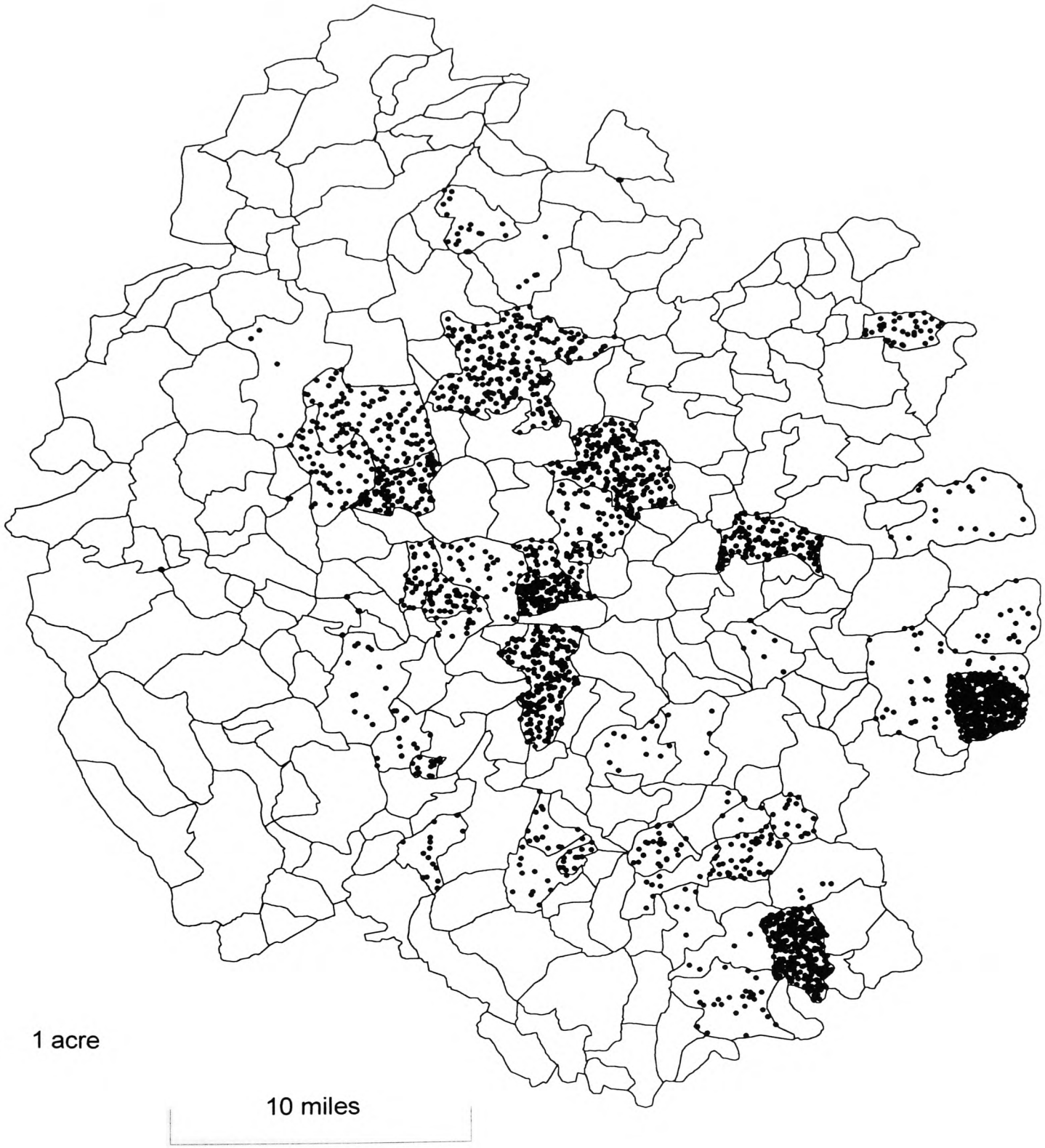
fourteenth century. Conversely, it is possible that the relatively low figure for Archenfield (16.5%) may be indicative of an increase in the importance of arable in this region (see map H24 above).

Map H37: Distribution, 1456-1507

This map shows a dramatic rise in the distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the Ross Region, notably around Weston-under-Penyard. A group of parishes have emerged between Hereford and Leominster, on the flood plains of the Rivers Wye and Lugg, as an important area for transfers of these land types in this period. There are also very high concentrations on the Eastern Plain, east of the River Leadon, particularly around Eastnor. The continued rise in the average acreage of pasture and meadow per fine during this period (see table H9) has had an effect on this map with distinct clusters appearing in individual parishes as the result of one transaction. For example, most of the data for Eastnor, on the Eastern Plain, was due to the 300 acres of pasture obtained by the Kinight, Gilbert Talbot, in 1505, along with five messuages, 40 acres of arable 12 acres of meadow and 20 acres of wood, from Richard Monyngton and David ap Guyllam Morgan and his wife, Margaret.[120] This fine provides a good example of the changing importance of land types in this period.

[120] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/24.

H37: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507.



4.6(v) Changes in wood over time.

There is not enough evidence of woodland transfers in fines for the first half of the thirteenth century to produce a map and so the first will be for the period 1251-1302. This should not be taken as a sign that woodland was not being conveyed in Herefordshire at this time but rather that this land type was rarely mentioned in the earliest documents. Indeed, it is known that assarting was widespread in Herefordshire in the early thirteenth century (see section 4.2 above). The only document to mention wood in the first half of the thirteenth century was issued in 1248 and recorded the transfer of 30 acres from Roger de Hereford to Robert the prior of Hereford.[121]

Map H38: Regional percentages, 1251-1302

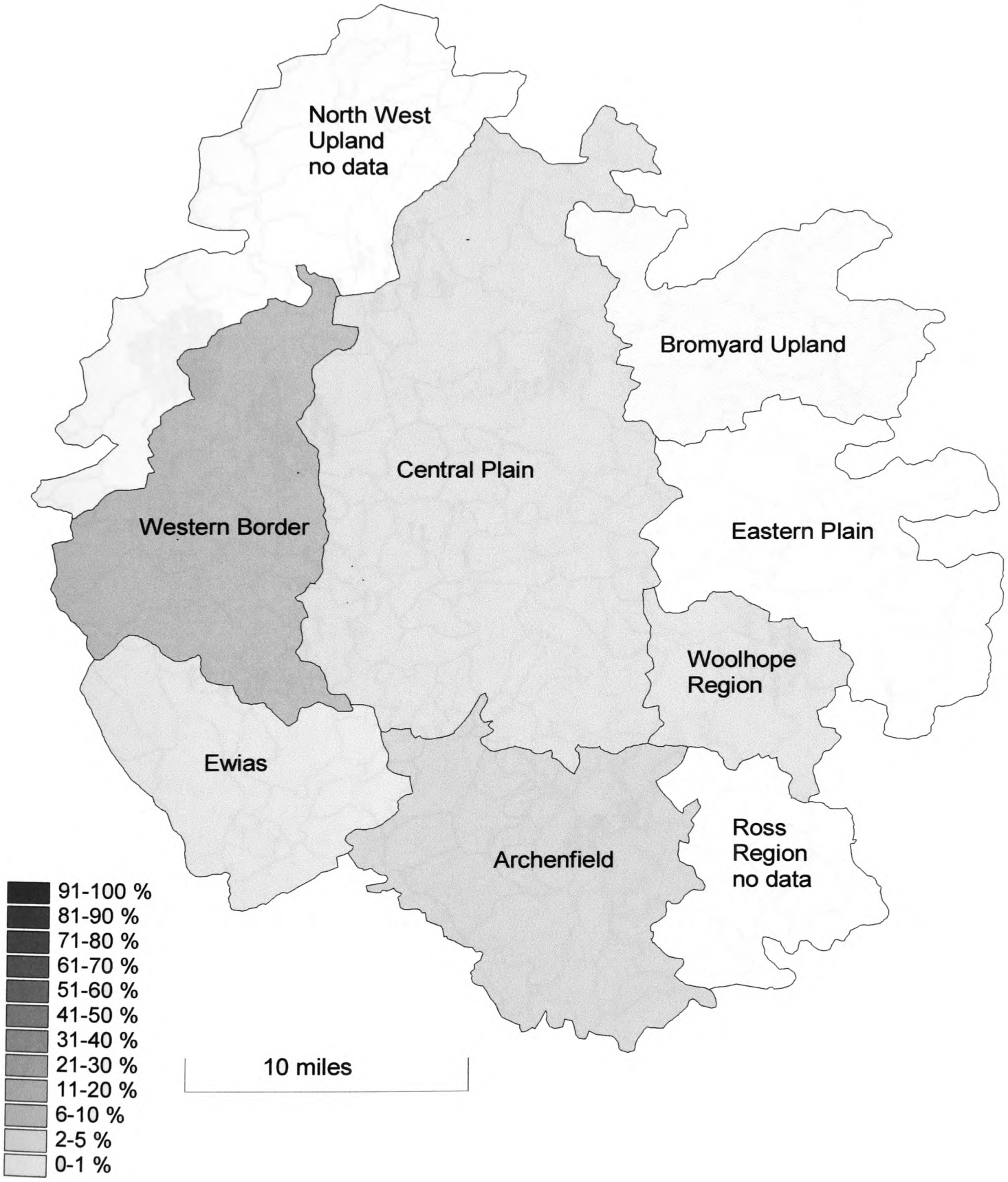
Records of woodland transfers in fines are generally still quite low in this period. However, the Western Border has a very high percentage (over 16%) due, primarily, to a transfer of 200 acres of wood in Lyonshall.[122] The conveyance has been mentioned above in relation to other land types in this period. It is possible that this unusual transaction is indicative of new settlement occurring on the Western Border. Certainly the amount of wood mentioned is much higher than in any other fine during this period and it shows that feet of fines were used to transfer large amounts of this land type on occasion.

Archenfield is shown to have the next highest percentage of woodland transfers at this time (almost 5%). This is mainly due to transfers around the parish of Sellack (bordering on the Ross Region) which is interesting because Archenfield was one of the

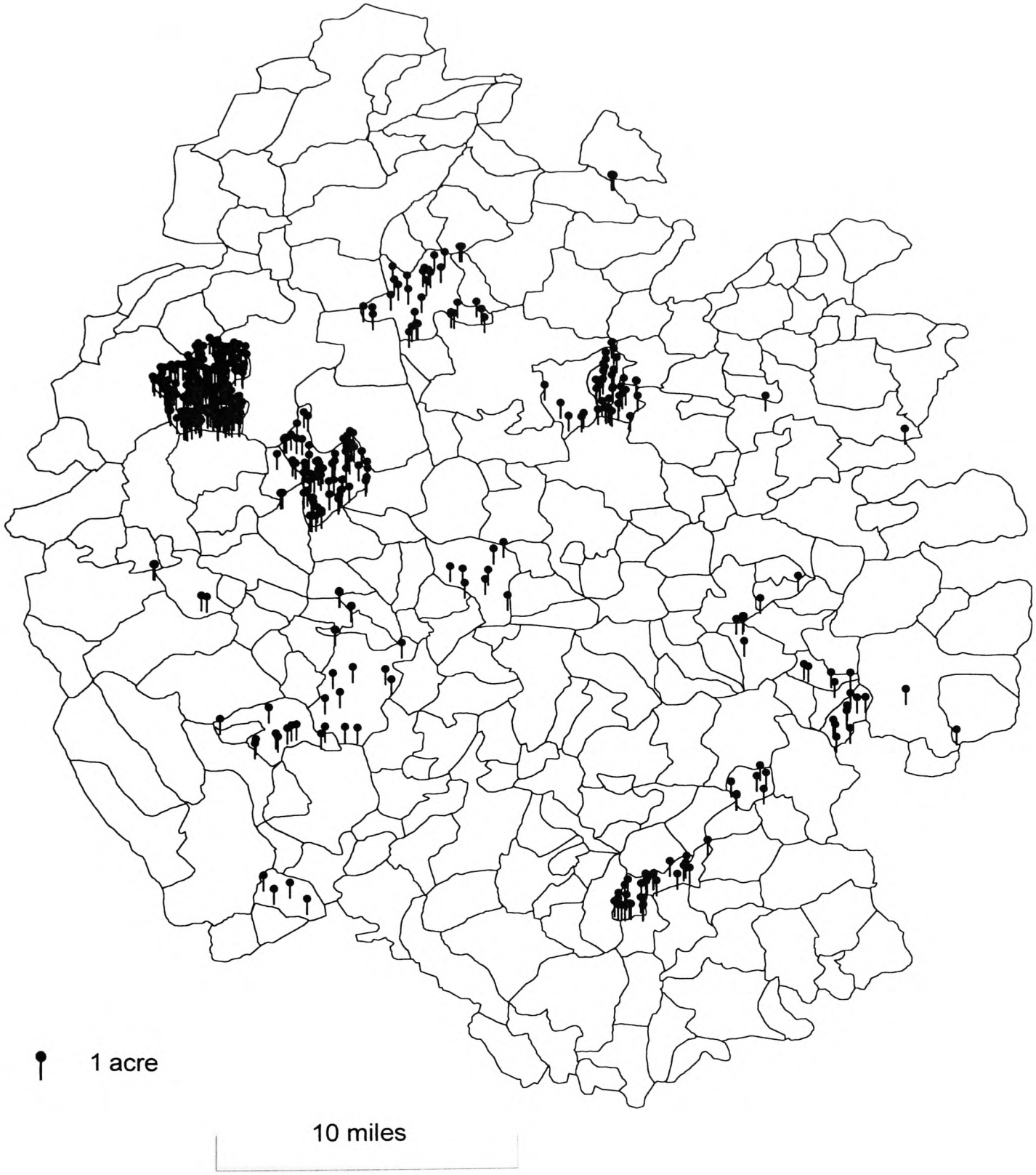
[121] PRO: CP25/1/12/228.

[122] PRO: CP25/1/81/17/12.

H38: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



H39: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



regions that had experienced large scale woodland clearances in the early thirteenth century, particularly in the west of the region (see section 4.2 above). The woodland mentioned in fines is in the east of the region and may be evidence of smaller scale clearances following wide scale destruction of ancient woodlands such as the Treville Forest earlier in the century. The only other regions with percentages worth noting are the Central Plain (3%) and the Woolhope Region (2.5%).

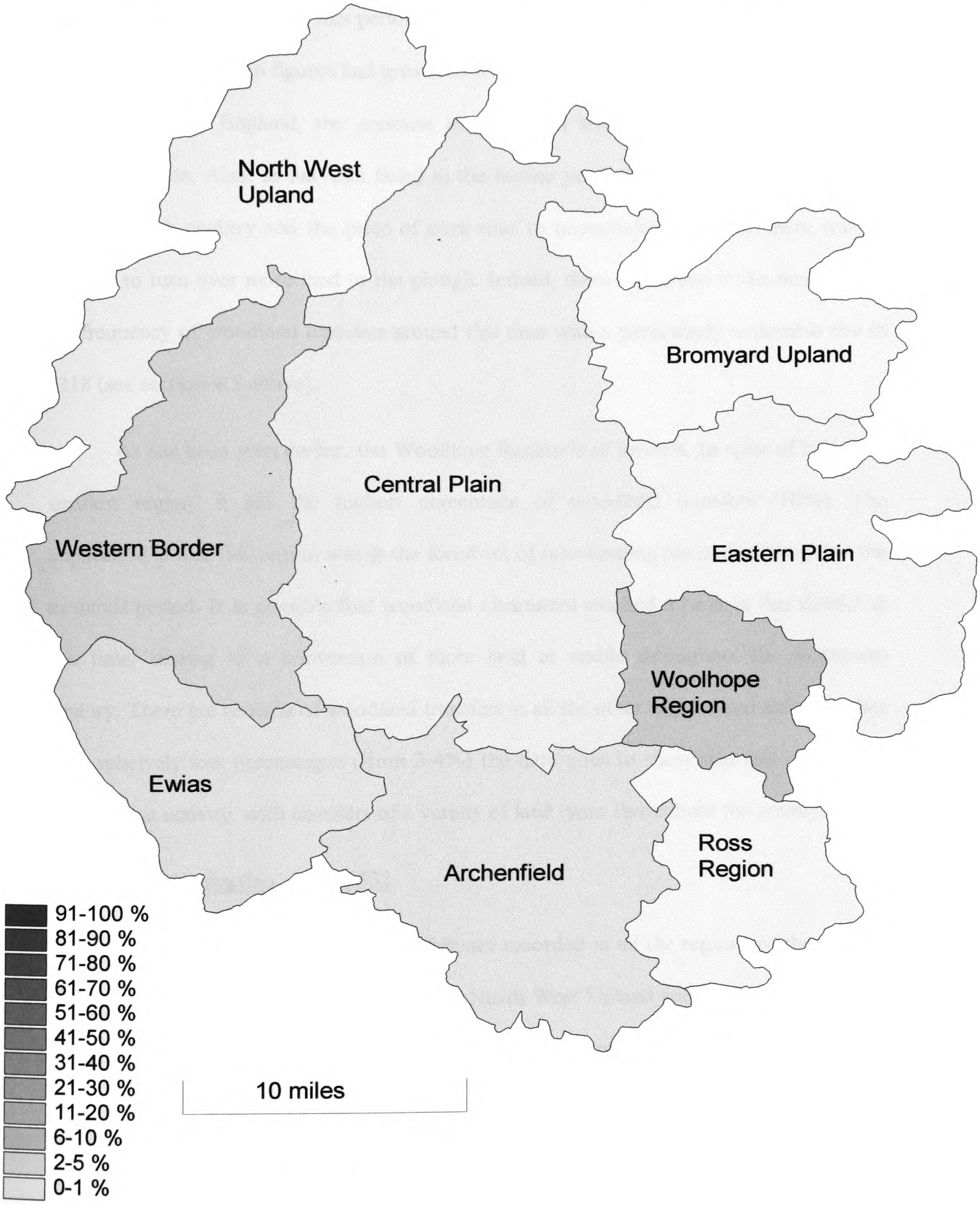
Map H39: Distribution, 1251-1302

There is some evidence of woodland transfers in most of the regions of Herefordshire. It is especially concentrated in the parishes of Lyonshall (due to the large transaction in 1275 mentioned above)[123] and at nearby Weobley and Kingsland. There are other notable clusters in Humber, near Leominster, and at Sellack between Archenfield and the Ross Region. Overall, most of the transfers appear to be to taking place to the north of the River Wye.

Map H40: Regional percentages, 1303-1352

The Western Border, Ewias and Archenfield stand out as a distinctive district with similar percentages of woodland transfers (all about 5%). The Western Border and Archenfield were significant regions in map H38. It seems that southwestern Herefordshire remained an important district in terms of woodland transfers in the early fourteenth century. In contrast the districts traditionally associated with arable farming have fewer records, presumably because they had been cleared and settled at a much earlier date. The districts noted to have had important assarts in the thirteenth century,

H40: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



such as Garway and Treville (see section 4.2 above), seem to have significant woodland transfers recorded in fines in this period (see map H41 below). It is likely that by the early 1300s, when population figures had grown to levels that were becoming difficult to sustain in some parts of England, the pressure on land was leading to further clearances in woodland areas. Also, as harvests failed in the famine years during the second decade of the fourteenth century and the price of corn rose to unprecedented levels, there was an impetus to turn over more land to the plough. Indeed, there was a rise in the amount and the frequency of woodland transfers around this time with a particularly noticeable rise in 1318 (see section 4.5 above).

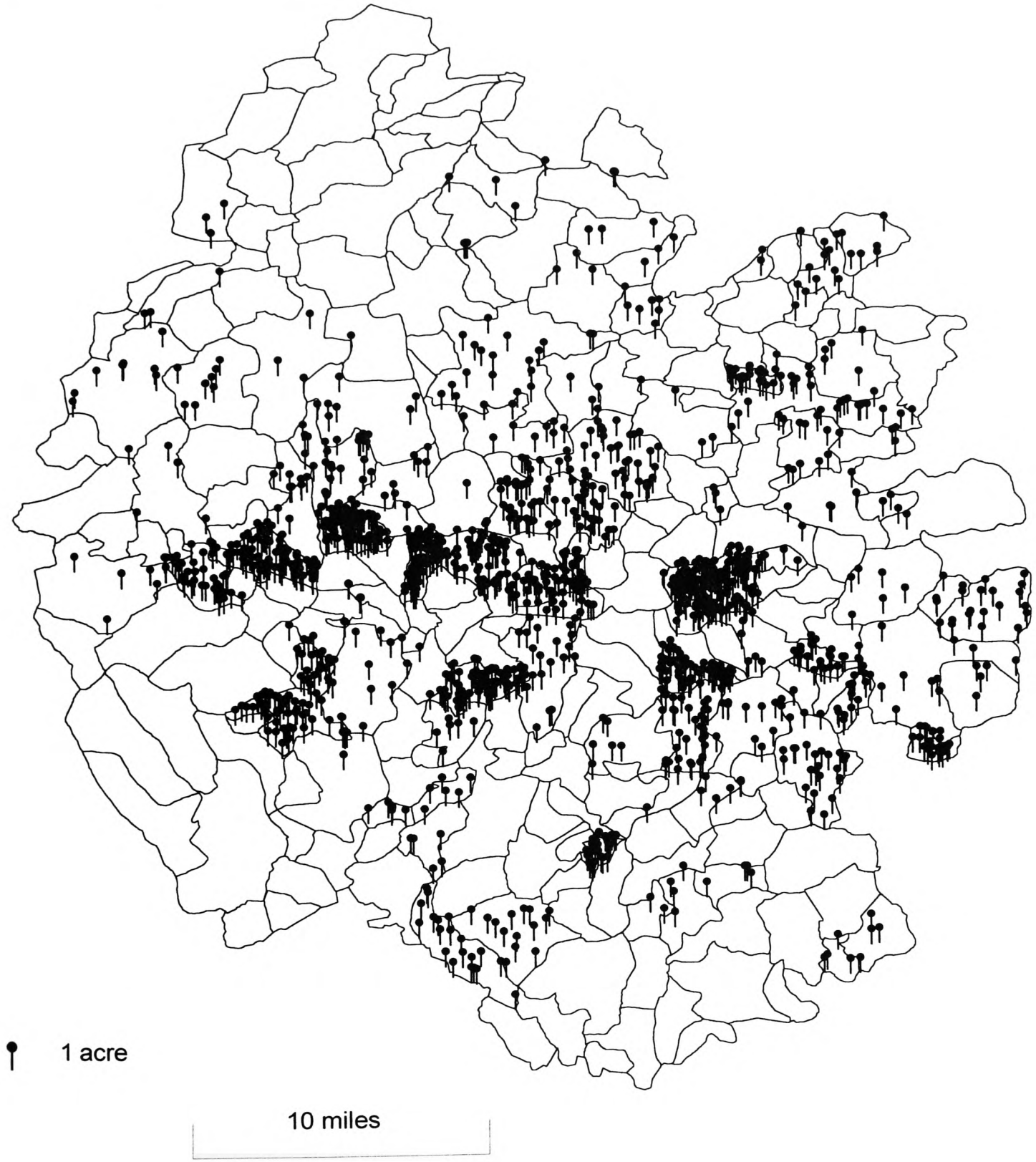
As has been seen earlier, the Woolhope Region is of interest. In spite of being the smallest region, it has the highest percentage of woodland transfers (10%). The implication is that this region was at the forefront of new farming methods throughout the medieval period. It is possible that woodland clearances reached a peak in this district at this time, leading to a conversion of more land to arable throughout the fourteenth century. There are records of woodland transfers in all the other regions and although they have relatively low percentages (from 2-4%) the data goes to show that this period was one of great activity, with transfers of a variety of land types throughout the county.

Map H41: Distribution, 1303-1352

As noted above, woodland transfers are recorded in all the regions of the county. They are limited in the extreme north of the North West Upland and on the northern part of the Central Plain. The main concentrations are on the southern part of the Central Plain,

[123] PRO: CP25/1/81/17/12.

H41: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



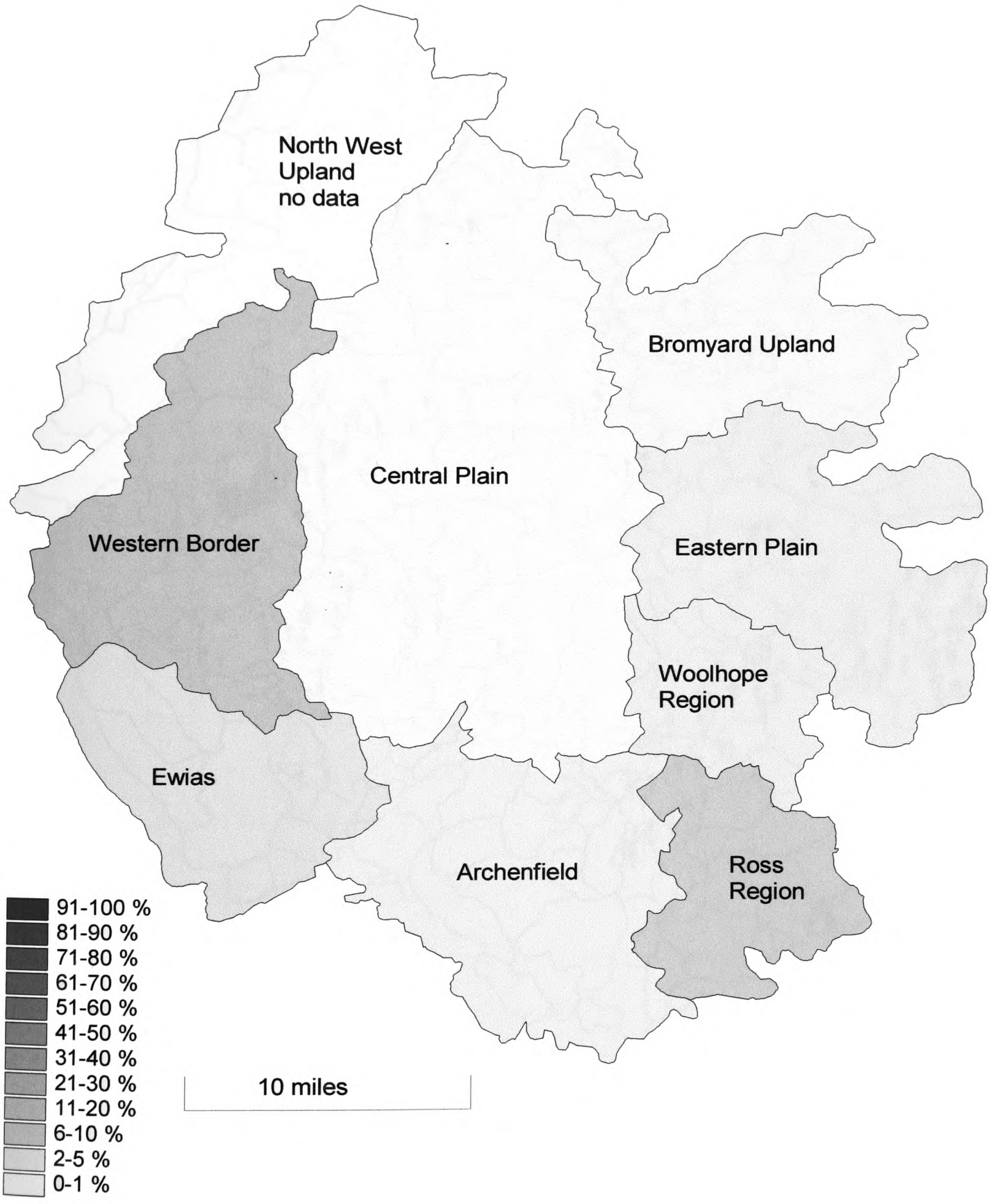
the western part of the Eastern Plain and the Woolhope Region. The group of parishes around Vowchurch in the Golden Valley, show a continued record of woodland transfers from the previous distribution map and continue to show significant records for the rest of the fourteenth century. There are notable clusters in western Archenfield, particularly near Treville, and throughout the whole of the Woolhope Region. It is clear that these districts were very important in terms of woodland transfers (see map H40 above). Overall, a band across the middle of the county stands out as having high numbers of transfers, particularly in comparison with northern Herefordshire.

Map H42: Regional percentages, 1353-1404

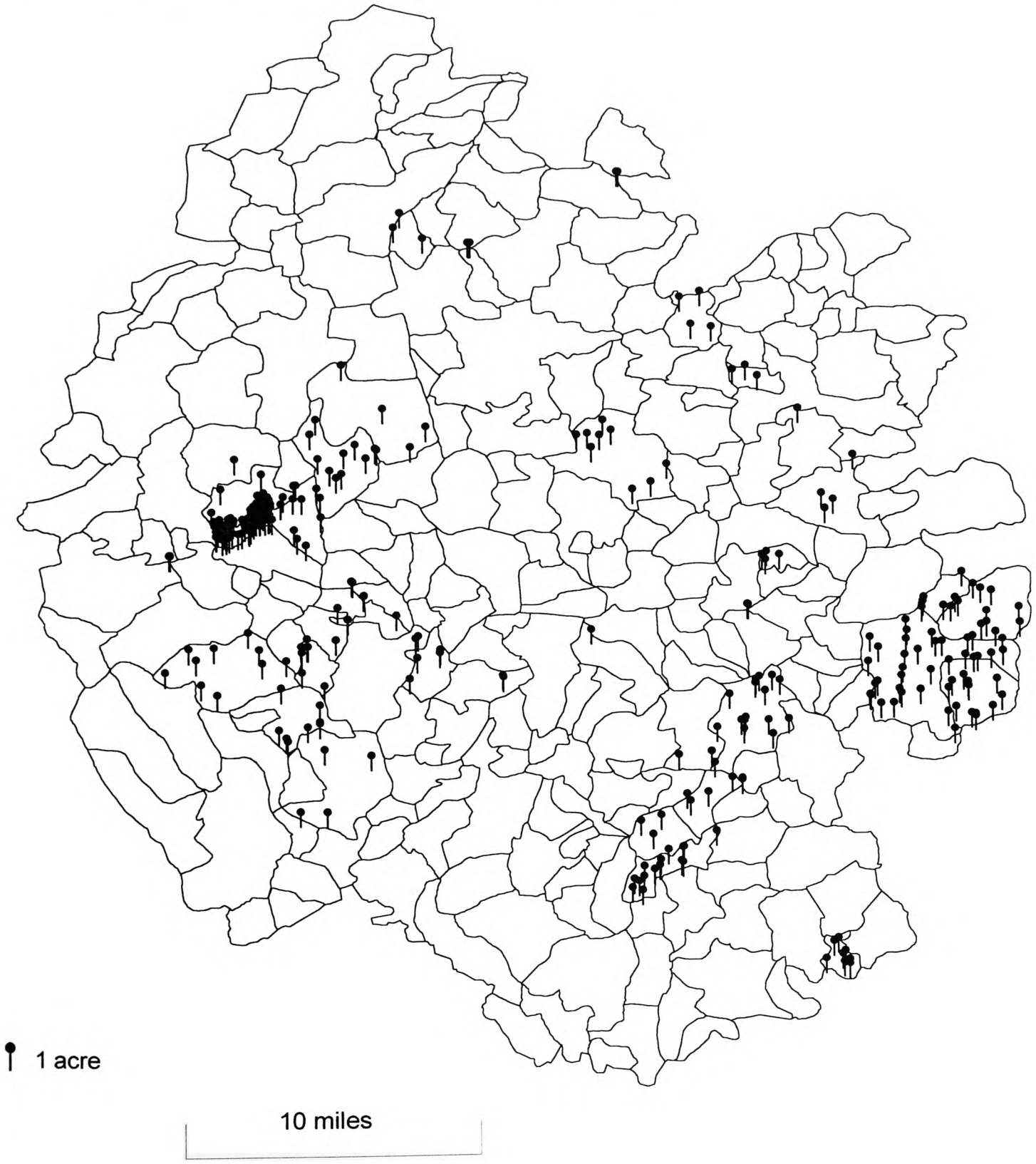
The most noticeable features of this map are the continued importance of the Western Border in terms of woodland transfers (9%), the rise in significance of the Ross Region (5.5%) and the scarcity of transfers on the Central Plain (just 49 acres of wood recorded for the whole region leading to a percentage figure of under 1%). Ewias has a relatively significant figure (4.5%) with transfers concentrated in the parishes closest to the Western Border region, around the Golden Valley (see map H43 below). Although the Eastern Plain and the Woolhope Region have similar figures of around 3.5% this represents a slight rise on the Eastern Plain but a major fall in Woolhope over map H40. This reinforces the point that there was a very significant period of activity in the Woolhope Region during the first half of the fourteenth century.

The rise in woodland transfers in the Ross Region is interesting because this region was to emerge as the most significant arable region in Herefordshire in the first half of the

H42: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



H43: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



fifteenth century, following a period of great agricultural change in the county (see map H22 above). It is possible that the woodland transfers recorded here were part of a process apparent in regions, such as Woolhope, earlier in the century whereby woodland was converted to arable. The lack of transfers recorded in the largest region, the Central Plain, suggests that this type of process was of much less importance in the traditional arable regions. This may be because these regions were subject to settlement and clearance at a much earlier date. Indeed, there are mentions of assarting and suggestions of the clearance of waste on the Central Plain in Domesday Book (see section 4.2 above). It appears that the traditional arable regions changed to ones of more mixed farming in the later medieval period, whereas in the outlying regions new settlement was occurring at a later date.

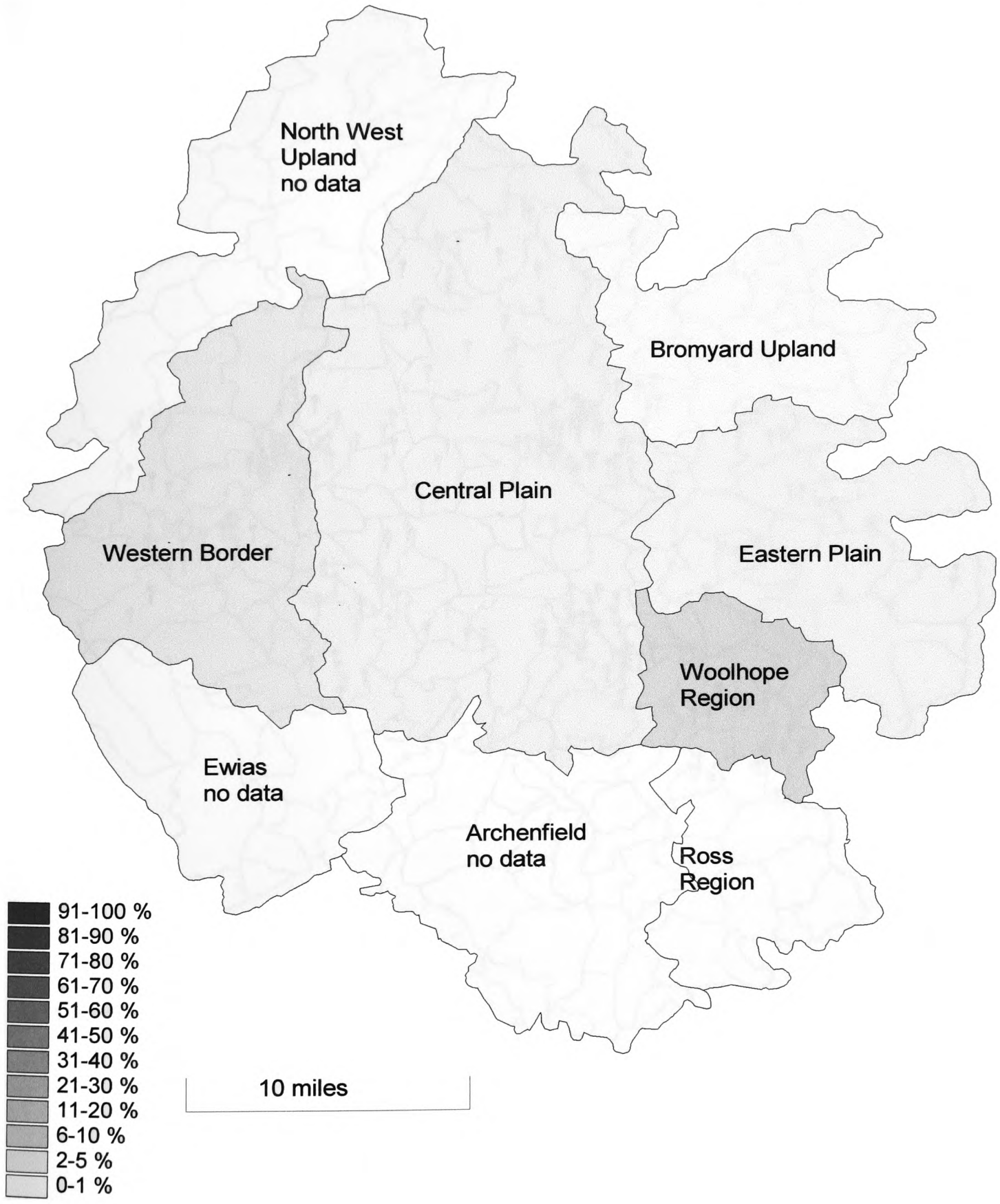
Map H43: Distribution, 1353-1404

Density and distribution has fallen dramatically from map H41. The main areas are the Western Border near Letton and in the Golden Valley around Vowchurch and Abbey Dore. There are other important clusters around Ledbury and Eastnor on the Eastern Plain and in the northern part of the Ross Region. The dramatic fall on the Central Plain from the previous period is very apparent on this map.

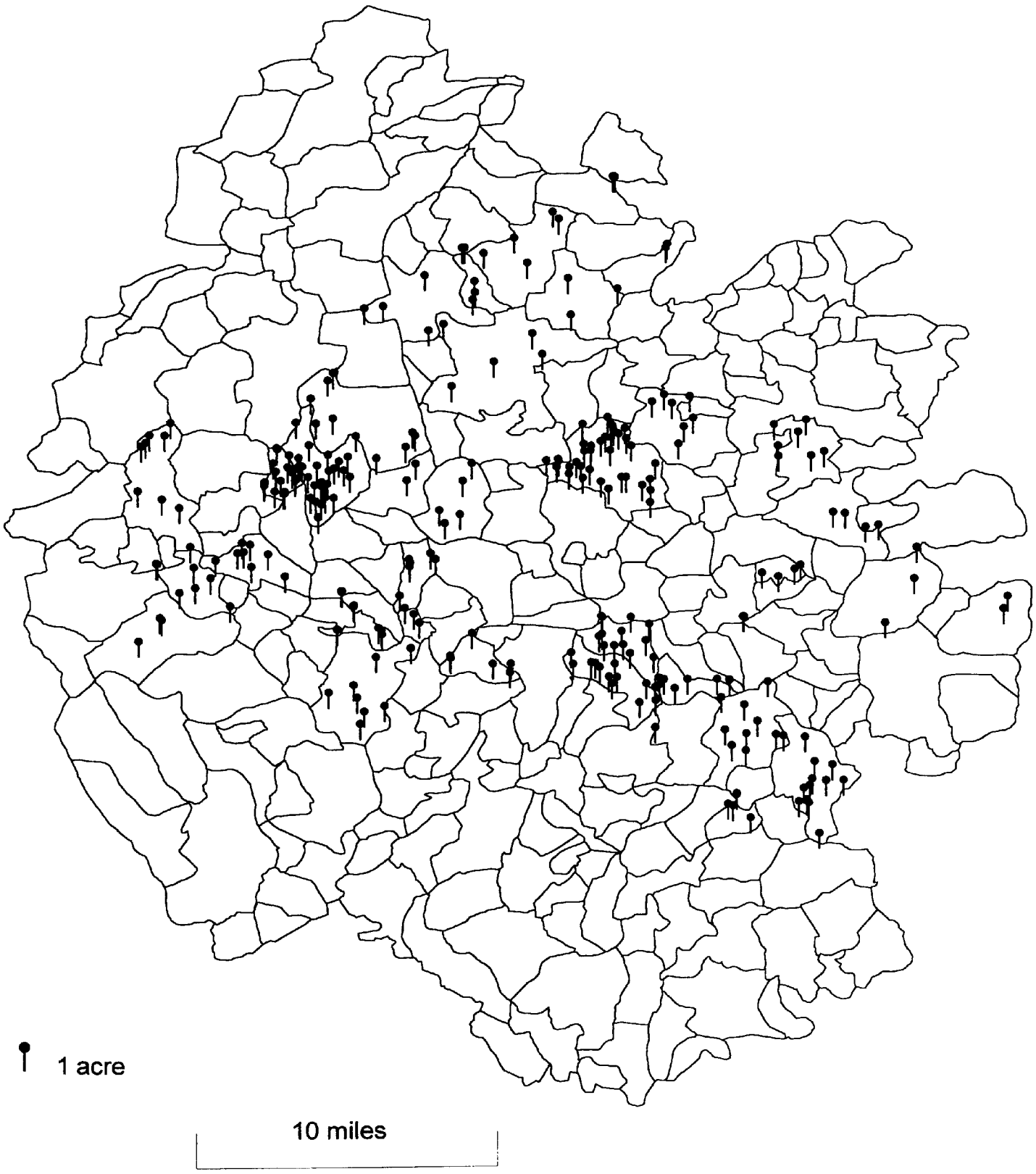
Map H44: Regional percentages, 1405-1455

The most noticeable feature of this map is the very low percentage of woodland transferred in the whole of Herefordshire. There is little or no data in the south and the

H44: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



H45: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



northwest of the county. The most significant regions are Woolhope (4.5%) and the Western Border (3.5%). It is clear that woodland had been greatly reduced as a proportion of the total land recorded in fines by the end of the fourteenth century. Indeed, records of woodland transfers on the Central Plain, for example, had fallen to negligible levels by the mid fourteenth century (see maps H40-H43).

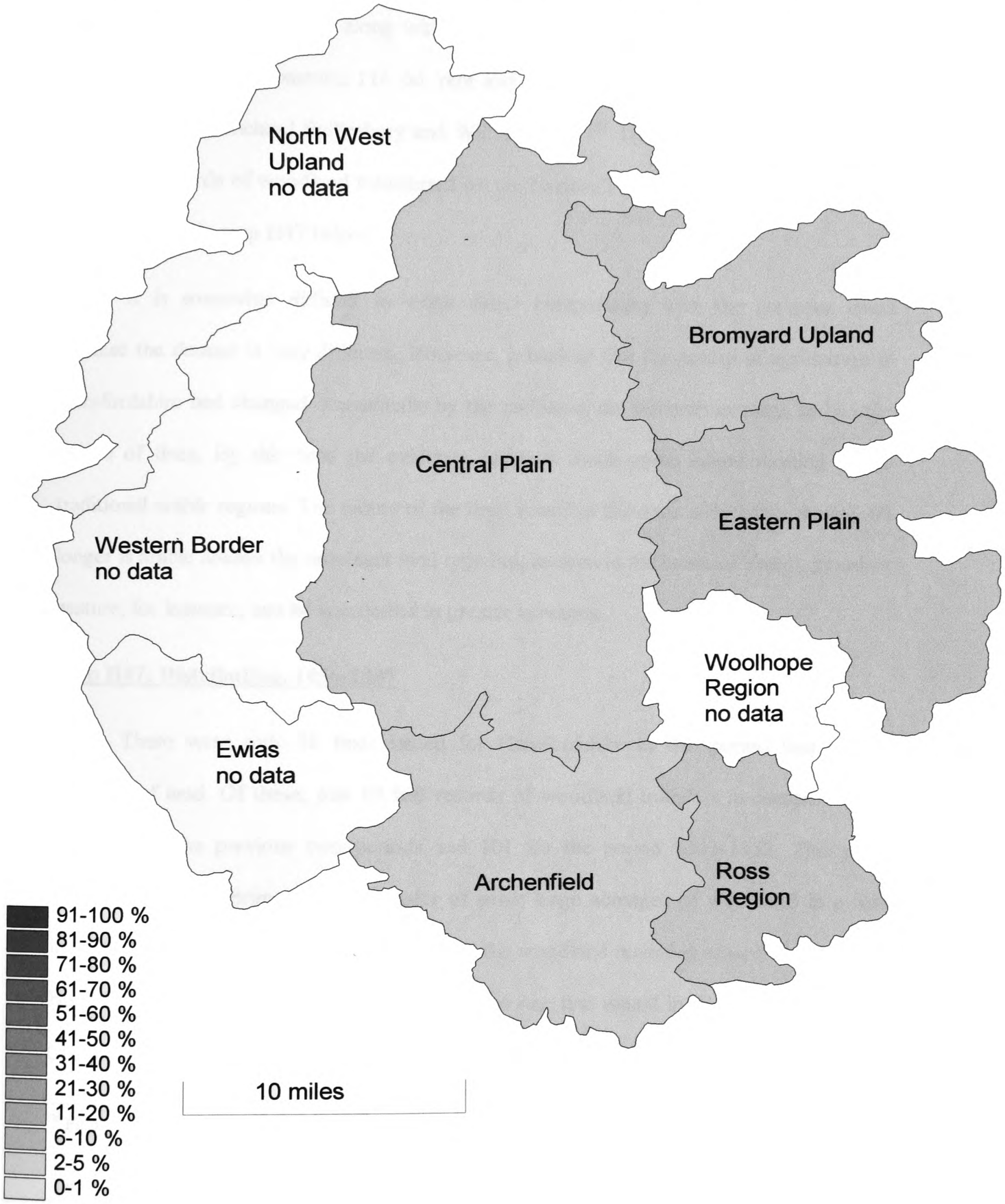
Map H45: Distribution, 1405-1455

This map shows the parishes with woodland transfers in fines and reveals that much of the activity on the Western Border was concentrated around Sarnesfield and a band cantered around Staunton-on-Wye. There is cluster in Bodenham, on the Central Plain and an interesting band to the east and west of Woolhope. There are large tracts with no evidence of woodland conveyances throughout the south and northwest of the county.

Map H46: Regional percentages, 1456-1507

The main feature of this map is the lack of data in regions that have had significant records of woodland transfers in the previous periods, notably the Western Border and the Woolhope Region. The regions with data have some quite high percentages, especially the Bromyard Upland (15.5%). The explanation for this may lie in the fall in the importance of arable transfers on a countywide basis and a change in the nature of the evidence. During this period there are much fewer fines issued but the average total acreage per fine has increased by an enormous amount (see table H8 above). Therefore, a few fines can have a

H46: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507.



great influence on the data. For example, at Eastnor in 1469, the chaplain, John Foster obtained 236 acres of wood, along with 15 messuages, 122 acres of arable, 37 acres of meadow, 147 acres of pasture, 11/- 6d. rent and the manor of Bronsil (in Eastnor parish) from two clerks, Richard Spillesbury and William Baily.[124] This fine is mainly responsible for all the records of woodland transferred on the Eastern Plain in this period and this can be seen clearly in map H47 below.

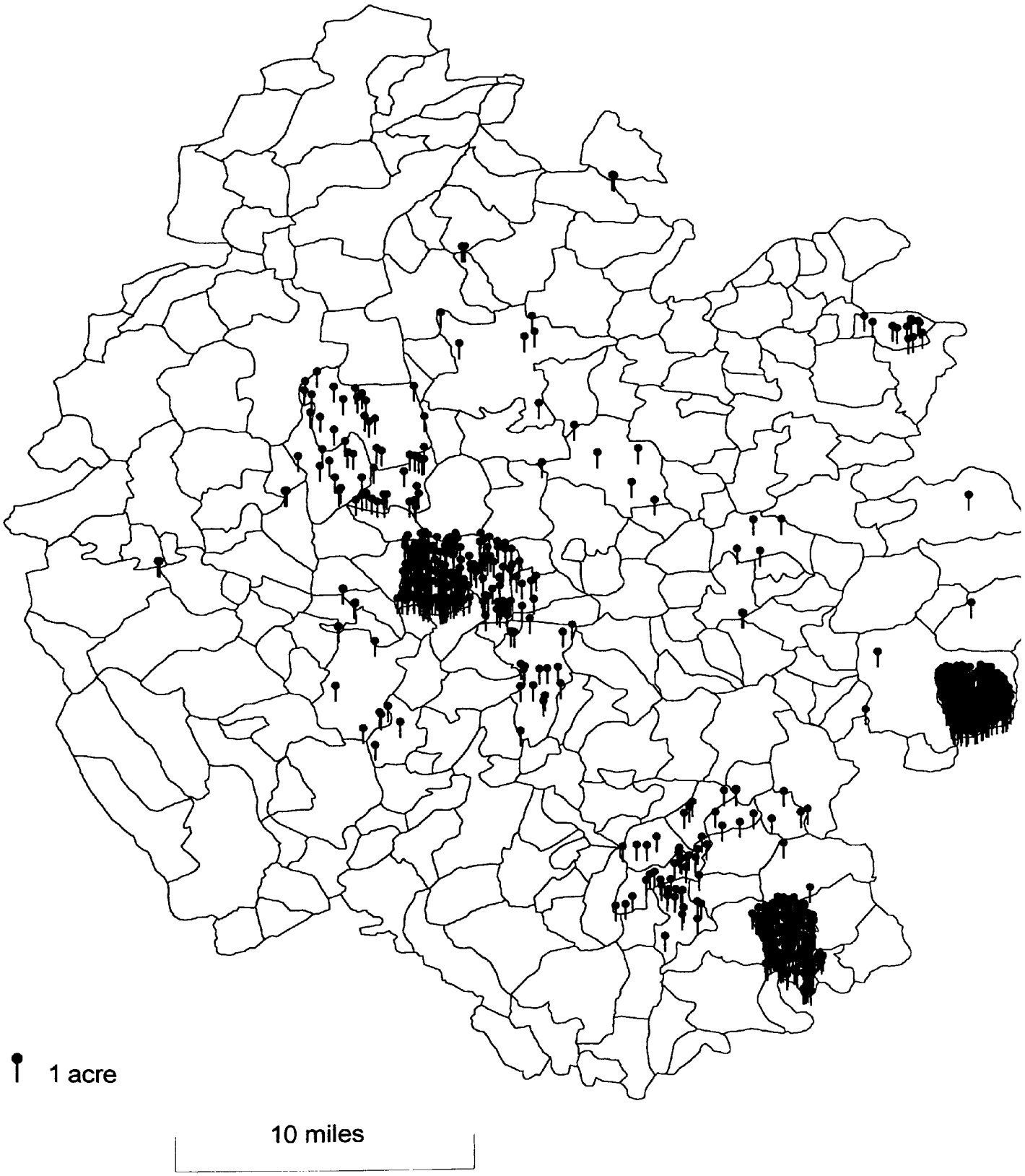
It is somewhat difficult to make direct comparisons with the previous maps because the dataset is very different. However, it is clear that the nature of agriculture in Herefordshire had changed dramatically by the middle of the fifteenth century, as had the nature of fines. By this time the evidence suggests much more mixed farming in the traditional arable regions. The nature of the fines issued at this time reflect this change, no longer is arable always the dominant land type but, as seen in the example above, wood or pasture, for instance, can be transferred in greater acreages.

Map H47: Distribution, 1456-1507

There were only 38 fines issued for Herefordshire in this period that record transfers of land. Of these, just 19 had records of woodland transfers in comparison to over 30 for the previous two periods and 101 for the period 1303-1352. This map, therefore, reflects, primarily, the transfer of some large acreages of woodland in a few individual documents. For example, almost all the woodland recorded around Brinsop and Burghill, to the northwest of Hereford, is due to one fine issued in Westminster in 1456 (the start of this period). The document conveys the manor of Credenhill, along with a

[124] PRO: CP25/1/83/57/9.

H47 : Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1507



messuage and 500 acres of arable, 51 acres of meadow, 40 acres of pasture and 200 acres of wood, in Credenhill, Brinsop and Hill juxta Tillington (Tillington court in Burghill), from Thomas Bromwich (Snr.) to John, Earl of Shrewsbury.[125]

4.7 People and Property.

A database of 4823 people recorded in the Herefordshire fines has been produced. It consists of plaintiffs and deforciants, their spouses and family members, tenants and attorneys. Some fines provide only the names of the people immediately involved in the transaction. For example, a fine issued at Lichfield in 1199 records the transfer of a virgate of arable from Ralph, son of Ralph to Walter son of Ralph.[126] In contrast, in 1347, a fine issued at Westminster provides much more information. It records the transfer of a messuage, ten acres of arable, an acre and a rod of meadow in Lyde Saucey from John Le Yonge and Isabella, his wife, Roger the Tailor of Merton and Sibill, his wife, Walter the Mason and Joanna, his wife, Stephen the Milward and Alice, his wife and Walter of Monmouth and Dionisia, his wife, to the Prior of Hereford.[127]

Messuages are frequently mentioned in the feet of fines. They often appear as part of a transfer of a variety of land types in a rural context. For example, in 1310, Walter de Risbury, Katherine his wife and Hugh his son obtained a messuage, 70 acres of arable and three acres of meadow from John de Bradfield in Risbury and Humber.[128] When

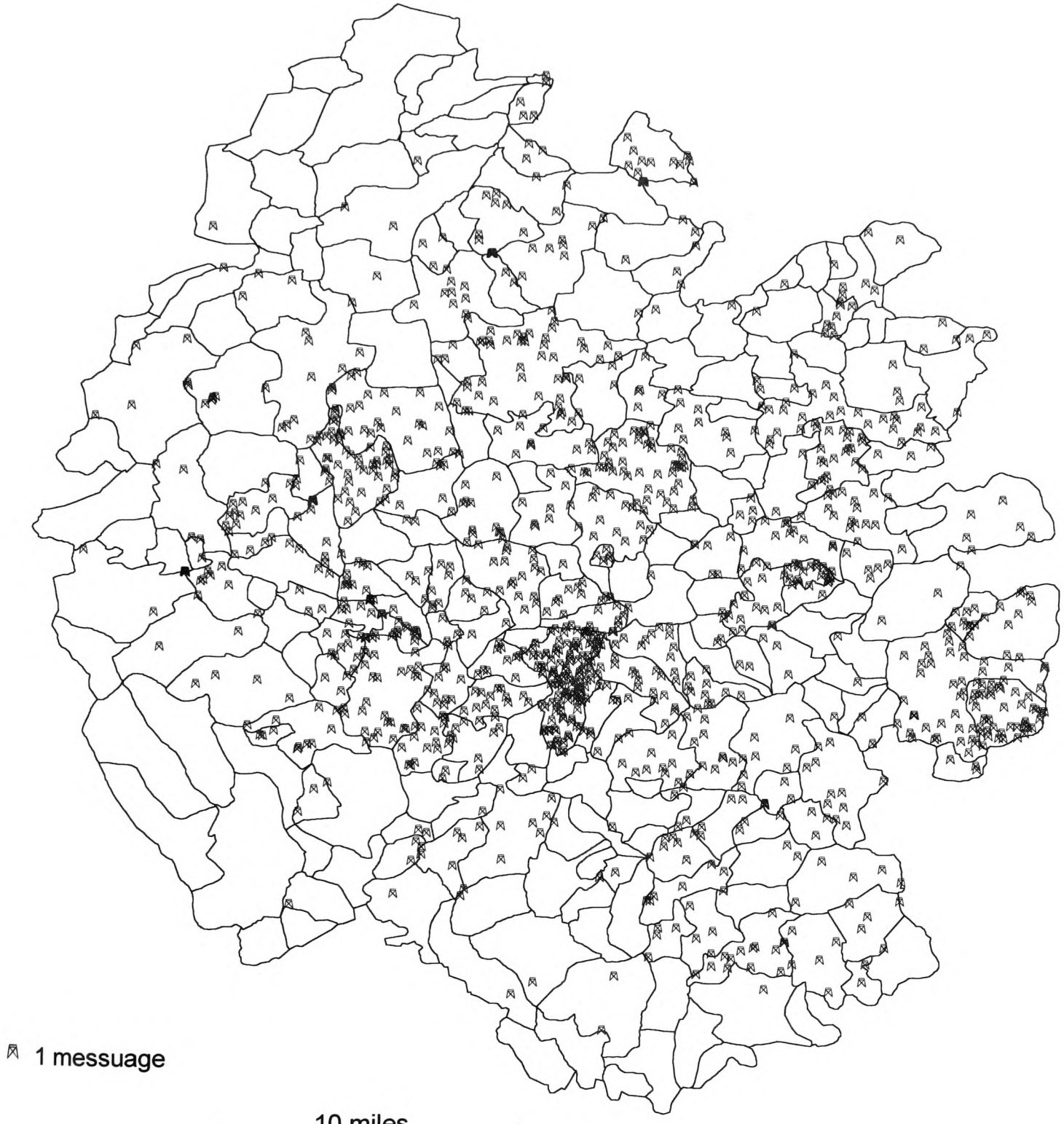
[125] PRO: CP25/1/83/56/76.

[126] PRO: CP25/1/80/1/3.

[127] PRO: CP25/1/82/42/148.

[128] PRO: CP25/1/82/29/28A.

H48: Total messuages recorded in the feet of fines



messuages appear on their own, without land, they are usually in an urban setting, such as the three messuages surrendered in Leominster in 1311 by John de la Doune and Juliana, his wife, to Hugh Hakelite.[129] Map H48 shows the wide distribution of messuages throughout the county. There are a total of 1256 messuages recorded in the Herefordshire fines. Concentrations are especially high in the major towns, with Hereford itself having by far the highest amount. The following is a list of the towns with the highest concentrations of messuages, 1199-1507.

Table H11: Highest concentrations of messuages, 1199-1507.

Hereford 123	Bodenham 47	Leominster 45	Weobley 45
Eastnor 43	Ledbury 38	Madley 27	Bromyard 26
Dilwyn 24	Avenbury 21	Burghill 18	Bishops Frome 17

Five of the places in the above table are noted as being boroughs in Beresford and Finberg's *Handlist.*[130] They are Hereford, Leominster, Weobley, Ledbury and Bromyard. If the remaining seven places provide evidence of numerous landless messuages they may constitute "minimal boroughs" of the type identified by Britnell in his examination of market towns in the Essex feet of fines.[131]

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[129] PRO: CP25/1/82/29/33.

[130] M. W. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs: A Handlist*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.122-124.

[131] R. H. Britnell, 'Burghal characteristics of market Towns in Medieval England', *Durham University Journal*, 73, (1981), pp. 147-151.

Of the seven places examined none showed any significant evidence of being a "minimal borough" by containing extensive detail of landless messuages. Indeed, there were only two such examples discovered. The first was in Bodenham in 1271 where Stephen le Clerk de Bodenham obtained a messuage from Luca le Chaplain de Bodenham.[132] The other (also in 1271) relates to a moiety of a messuage in Dilwyn, obtained by Ralph de St. Andoens from John de Strete.[133] The rest of the messuages recorded are all associated with land. The reason the non-burghal places appeared on the list was due to a variety of factors, usually a few fines mentioning the transfer of a large number of messuages together. For example, in 1257, the manor of Burghill, along with 13 messuages, four and a half virgates and 16 acres of arable, eight acres of wood and ten acres of meadow, was transferred from Basil de Burghill to Henry de Burghill.[134]

To search for evidence of "minimal boroughs" at a lower level it was decided to examine all places with ten or more messuages mentioned in the Herefordshire fines. There are 23 such places not including those on the above list. Of these 23, just two appear on the *Handlist:* Ross-on-Wye and Pembridge. Of the remaining 21 places, no strong evidence of "minimal boroughs" was found. The only evidence of landless messuages was in Kinnersley where one was transferred in 1311[135] and, more significantly, in Shelwick (Holmer), a suburb of Hereford. In a fine issued in 1292 Reginald Monward obtained two messuages, a mill and six shops in Hereford and Shelwick from William de

[132] PRO: CP25/1/81/15/325.

[133] PRO: CP25/1/81/16/338.

[134] PRO: CP25/1/80/13/275.

[135] PRO: CP25/1/82/30/59.

Granenore.[136] This type of fine may be indicative of the development of suburbs around Hereford of a less rural nature. A similar "landless" fine was issued in 1339 when Thomas de la Barre obtained three messuages and some rents in Dinedor, Hampton Bishop, Widemarsh and Holmer (all adjacent to Hereford) from John de la Barre.[137] Overall then it seems that the significance of "minimal boroughs" in Herefordshire was much less than Britnell's examination revealed for Essex. Britnell recognized an expansion in the manufacturing industry in Essex during the fourteenth-century that, he believes, led to the growth of the smaller market towns. It will be interesting to analyse any evidence of landless messuages in Shropshire and Gloucestershire to compare the situation in all the counties.

Sometimes fines mention individuals who are recorded as being burgesses. In Herefordshire, all the fines that mention burgesses (a total of seven documents all from the period 1417-27) are associated with Hereford or parishes in close proximity to the city. The first such fine, issued in the fifth year of the reign of Henry V, mentions Walter Mybbe, a burgess of Hereford who, along with William Borghull and the clerks William Broks, John Saundros and Nicholas Morys, transferred 73 acres of arable, 20 acres of meadow and 15 acres of pasture, along with three messuages, seven houses and a dove-cot in Upper and Lower Lyde, to the Knight, Walter son of Walter Devereux.[138] The last such fine was issued during the sixth year of the reign of Henry VI and concerned the transfer of 160 acres of arable, four acres of meadow, two messuages, a house and 30/-

[136] PRO: CP25/1/81/22/139.

[137] PRO: CP25/1/82/40/99.

[138] PRO: CP25/1/83/53/8.

rent in Hereford and its suburbs, from Thomas Mey, a burgess and merchant of Hereford and Walter Mybbe, another burgess, who was mentioned in the previous fine above, to Isabella, the wife of Thomas Monmouth.[139]

Some of the fines that mention burgesses are associated with landless messuages. For example, in 1422 the Hereford burgess, Richard Strange, along with Walter Kobyll and the clerk, William Lone obtained a messuage and nine shops in Hereford from Richard Walleweyn de Lugwardine and his wife Joan.[140] Also, in 1426, John Grene, a burgess of Hereford, in collaboration with Thomas Knovell, John Russell, George Breynton and the esquire Richard Delamare, obtained a messuage in Hereford from John Stroty de Bromyard.

Shops are another important sign of urban development. The first shops to be mentioned in the Herefordshire fines were in a transaction, referred to above, whereby Reginald Monward obtained six in Hereford and Shelwick, along with two messuages, a mill and 56/- rent, from the chaplain William de Granenore, in 1292.[141] The last fine to mention shops was in 1500 when the clerk, John Hyde and the chaplain, John Walle, obtained four in Hereford, along with a messuage and a garden, from John Baker and his wife, Margaret.[142] This fine was actually the first mention of shops since 1422. Most shop transfers occurred in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. As can be seen from map H49 the shops mentioned in the fines are all concentrated in Hereford and the

[139] PRO: CP25/1/83/54/16.

[140] PRO: CP25/1/83/54/1.

[141] PRO: CP25/1/22/139.

[142] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/15.

H49: Total shops recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.

neighbouring parishes of Hampton Bishop, Holmer, Lugwardine. There is one exception, at Leominster, where in 1310 Geoffrey, son of Nicholas le Walkere de Leominster surrendered a shop to Roger de Bruggewirht.[143] A total of 18 shops were surrendered in 1310, the highest number in any one year, primarily due to John de Ledbury and his wife, Isabella, who obtained 14 shops in Hereford from Roger de la Hull and Alena, his wife.[144]

Map H50 shows the distribution of tofts with the highest concentration in Hereford, followed closely by Weobley. The first toft to be mentioned was in 1284 when William de la Wodhende and Julia, his wife, surrendered their toft and 20 acres of arable in Pixley to Richard de la Lynde.[145] The last to be mentioned was in 1505 when John Pauncefote, esquire and Arthur Kemys, esquire, surrendered the manor of Leighton, along with two tofts, three messuages, 300 acres of arable, 40 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture, four acres of wood and 7/- 10d. rent in Much Cowarne, to Phillip Hunteley, Richard Roudun, John Aruola (Jnr.), William Goldsmyth, Roger Hawekyns and Thomas Knotte.[146]

Map H51 shows the distribution of mills recorded in fines in Herefordshire. The first to be mentioned was in Byford in 1199, when a quarter part of the mill was surrendered from Eve de Byford to Thomas, abbot of Dore.[147] The last to be mentioned was in Hardwick in 1429 when William Hardwick and his wife, Katrina obtained a mill along with the manor of Hardwick, two virgates of arable, eight acres of meadow, eight

[143] PRO: CP25/1/82/29/31.

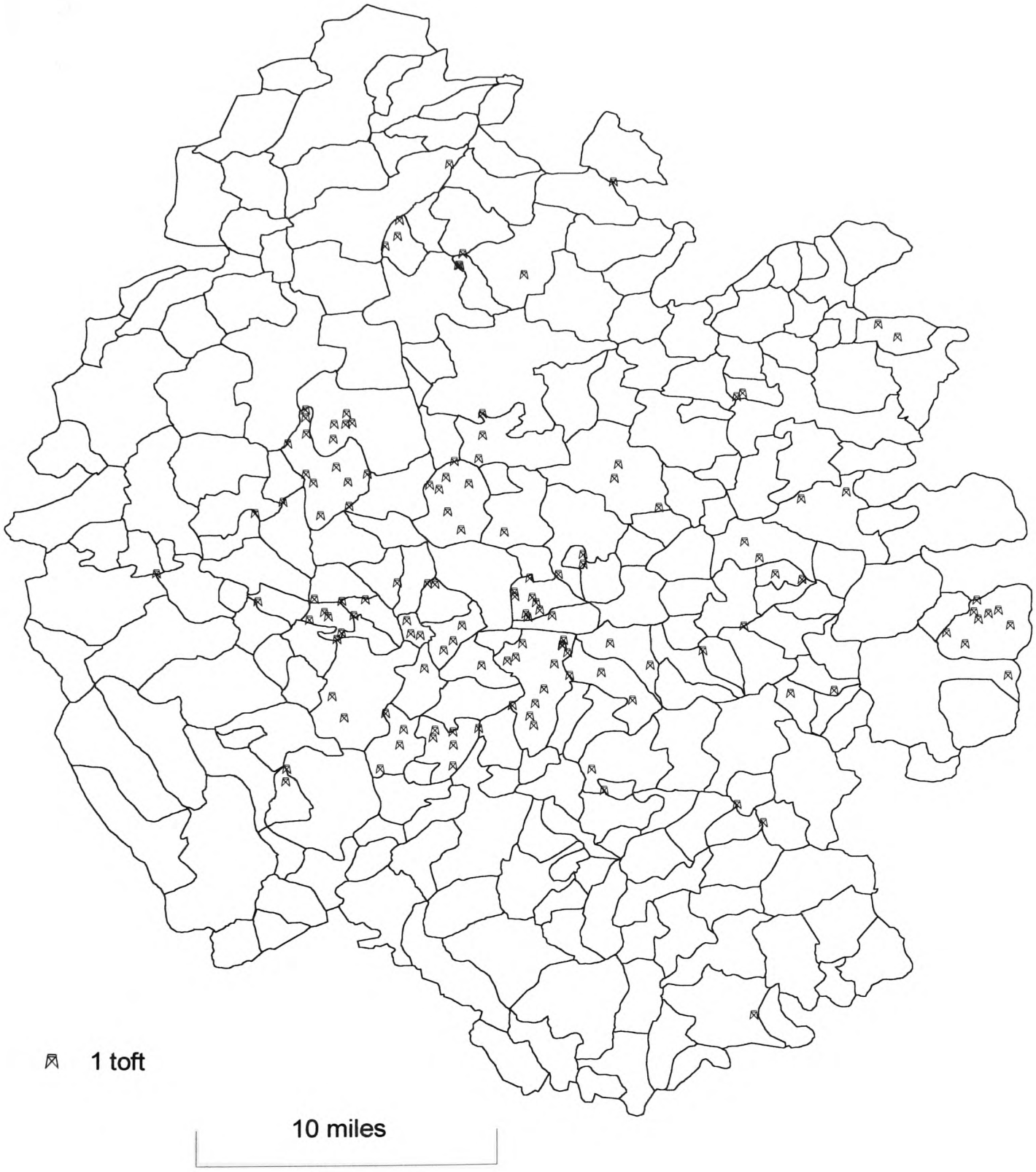
[144] PRO: CP25/1/82/29/36B.

[145] PRO: CP25/1/81/19/75.

[146] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/21.

[147] PRO: CP25/1/80/1/12.

H50: Total tofts recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.



acres of pasture and 4/- rent.[148] There are 15 mills mentioned in fines in the thirteenth century, 39 in the fourteenth century and three in the fifteenth century. There are noticeable concentrations of mills along the River Wye near Whitney, Winforton, Bredwardine, Monnington-on-Wye and Byford.

There are a variety of other types of property mentioned in fines, including 198 manors. For example in 1327 a fine, issued in York, records the surrender of the castle and manor of Kilpeck from John de Bohun de Kilpeck to Eleanor de Bohun (through her attorney, Adam de Gatesheued).[149] Other notable property transfers include the abbey and church of the apostles Peter and Paul in Leominster from Giles Hackelite and Juliana, his wife, to Robert the abbot of Reading (through his attorney, Michael de Byshopeston). The fine was issued in Shrewsbury in 1276. The following castles were also the subject of transfers: Ewyas Lacy,[150] Crickhowell,[151] Kilpeck,[152] Swansea, Lyonshall,[153] Abergavenny,[154] Snodhill,[155] Wylton on Wye,[156] Kilvey,[157] Lougher,[158] and Skenfrith.[159] Three lordships in Wales are also recorded, Gower, Abergavenny and Talgarth.[160] Six

[148] PRO: CP25/1/83/55/30.

[149] PRO: CP25/1/82/37/2.

[150] PRO: CP25/1/82/39/69.

[151] PRO: CP25/182/38/49.

[152] PRO: CP25/1/37/32; PRO: CP25/1/83/49/38.

[153] PRO: CP25/1/83/54/22.

[154] PRO: CP25/1/83/50/66; PRO: CP25/1/83/51/3.

[155] PRO: CP25/1/83/55/47.

[156] PRO: CP25/1/80/14/291.

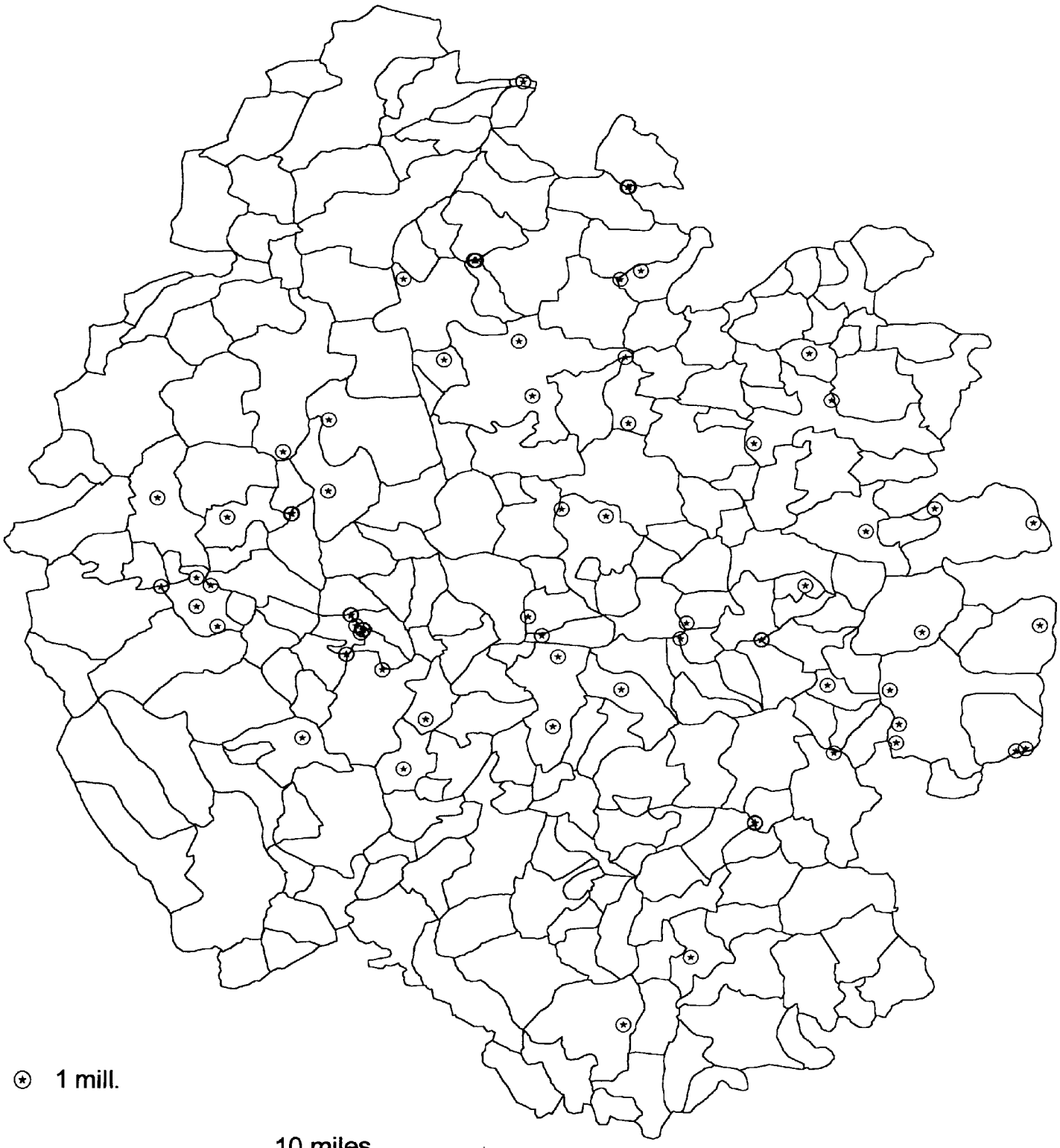
[157] PRO: CP25/1/83/57/6.

[158] PRO: CP25/1/83/57/6.

[159] PRO: CP25/1/80/5/59.

[160] PRO: CP25/1/83/57/6; PRO: CP25/1/83/50/66; PRO: CP25/1/83/51/3; PRO: CP25/1/83/57/5.

H51: Total mills recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1507.



⊛ 1 mill.

10 miles

Knight's Fees are recorded, four dovecots and a fishery on the River Lugg.[161] Twenty-six gardens are mentioned including 12 in the manor of Weston.[162] Four whole vills are the subject of conveyance,[163] as is a park belonging to Talgarth church[164] and pasture rights in the Forest of Dean.[165]

4.7(i) Welsh people in the Herefordshire fines.

To organize the data relating to people with a Welsh connection recorded in the Herefordshire fines it has been necessary to decide upon qualification criteria. People with an obvious Welsh name, such as Griffin son of Meurig who, along with Robert le Wafre, obtained half a carucate of arable in Bredwardine in 1226, have been allocated a direct Welsh link.[166] The same is true of Walter son of Llywelyn 'of the Thorne' who, in 1323, obtained 29 acres of arable in Thorne and Burley, near Bromyard, from his father.[167] Also, Philip ap Yenan Vaughan de Ewyas Lacy, prior of Cusop, who obtained the manor of Turnastone 'in Straddel' in 1373 from the Knight, Ralph de Norton and his wife Margaret.[168] People with possible Welsh links such as Henry Griffith, esquire who, along with Master John Grene and John Wynston, obtained two messuages, 100 acres of arable, 12 acres of meadow and 18 acres of pasture in Thruxton and Kilpeck from Jacob ap

[161] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/26.

[162] PRO: CP25/1/83/58/26.

[163] PRO: CP25/1/83/50/66; PRO: CP25/1/83/51/3; PRO: CP25/1/80/2/31.

[164] PRO: CP25/1/83/43/158.

[165] PRO: CP25/1/83/52/41.

[166] PRO: CP25/1/80/6/78.

[167] PRO: CP25/1/82/35/194.

[168] PRO: CP25/1/83/47/257.

Thomas and Margaret, the daughter of Thomas Jones, his wife, in 1462, have been grouped separately.[169] The same is true of those people with a connection with Wales through land holding or office rather than "nationality", such as William, Earl of Pembroke, who obtained lands in Wales in 1468.[170] The resulting lists identified 49 people with direct Welsh connections, 49 with probable Welsh connections and 50 with indirect Welsh connections. The list of people with direct connections was used to produce maps H52 and H53 that show the distribution of plaintiffs and deforciants of Welsh origin.

Maps H52 and H53

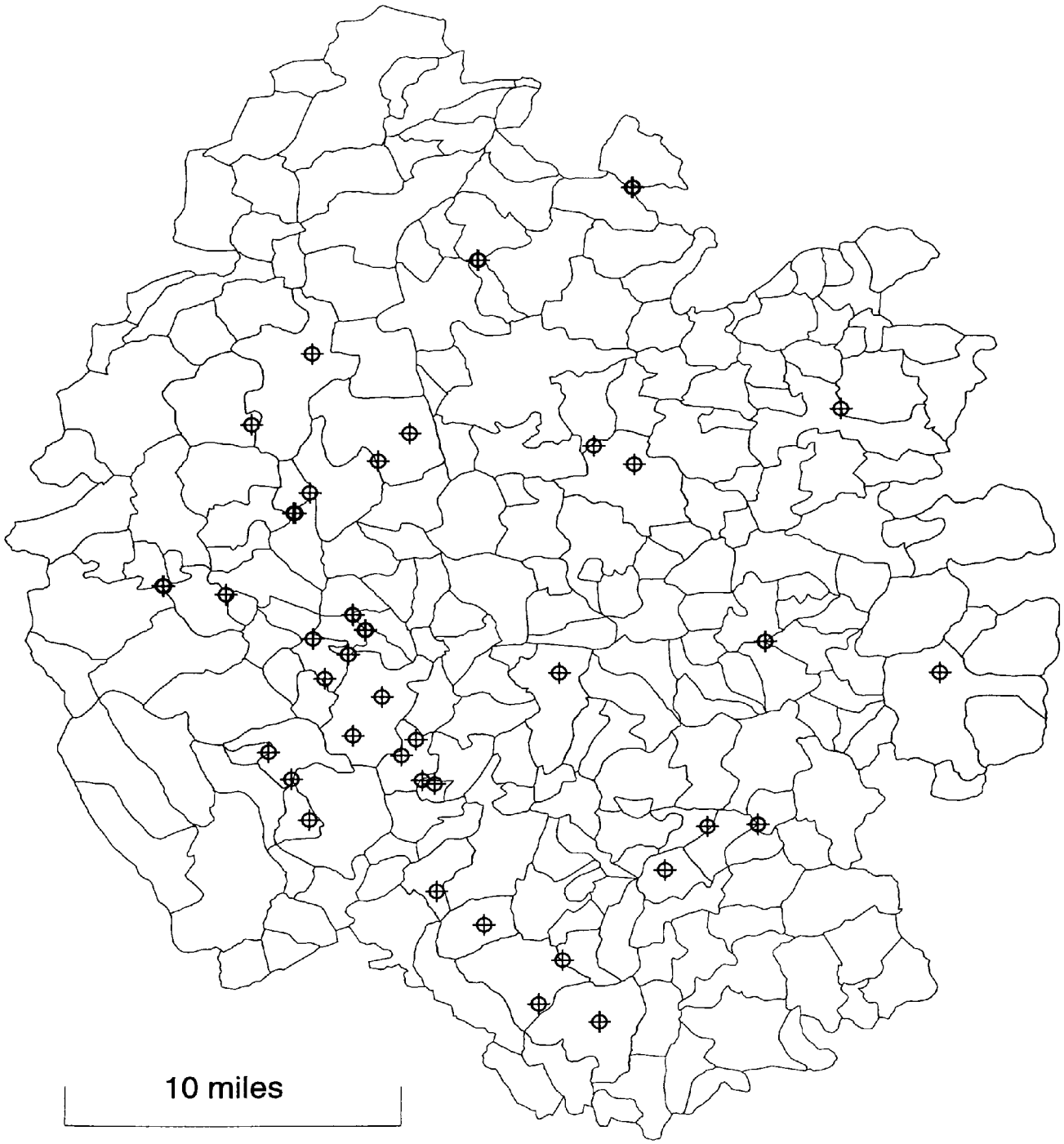
There are 27 plaintiffs and 21 deforciants of obvious Welsh origin recorded in the whole series of fines. This is a very small percentage of the total number of 4823 people recorded. The percentage is little improved even when people of probable Welsh origin are added to the total. The lack of data has meant that it has not been possible to see any significant trends over time. Most of the people of Welsh origin recorded in the fines appear in the south and west of the county. It might have been expected that more evidence of people of Welsh origin would have occurred in Ewias and Archenfield. The fact that there is a general lack of fine data in these areas seems significant when coupled with the low numbers of Welsh recorded. The majority of people of Welsh origin in Herefordshire may have been too poor to own land throughout the whole medieval period or they may have had their own methods of conveyance, such as *prid* (short term vifage of land).[171] It seems likely that many of these people, living in the marginal upland areas,

[169] PRO: CP25/1/83/57/4

[170] PRO: CP25/1/57/5; PRO: CP25/1/83/57/6.

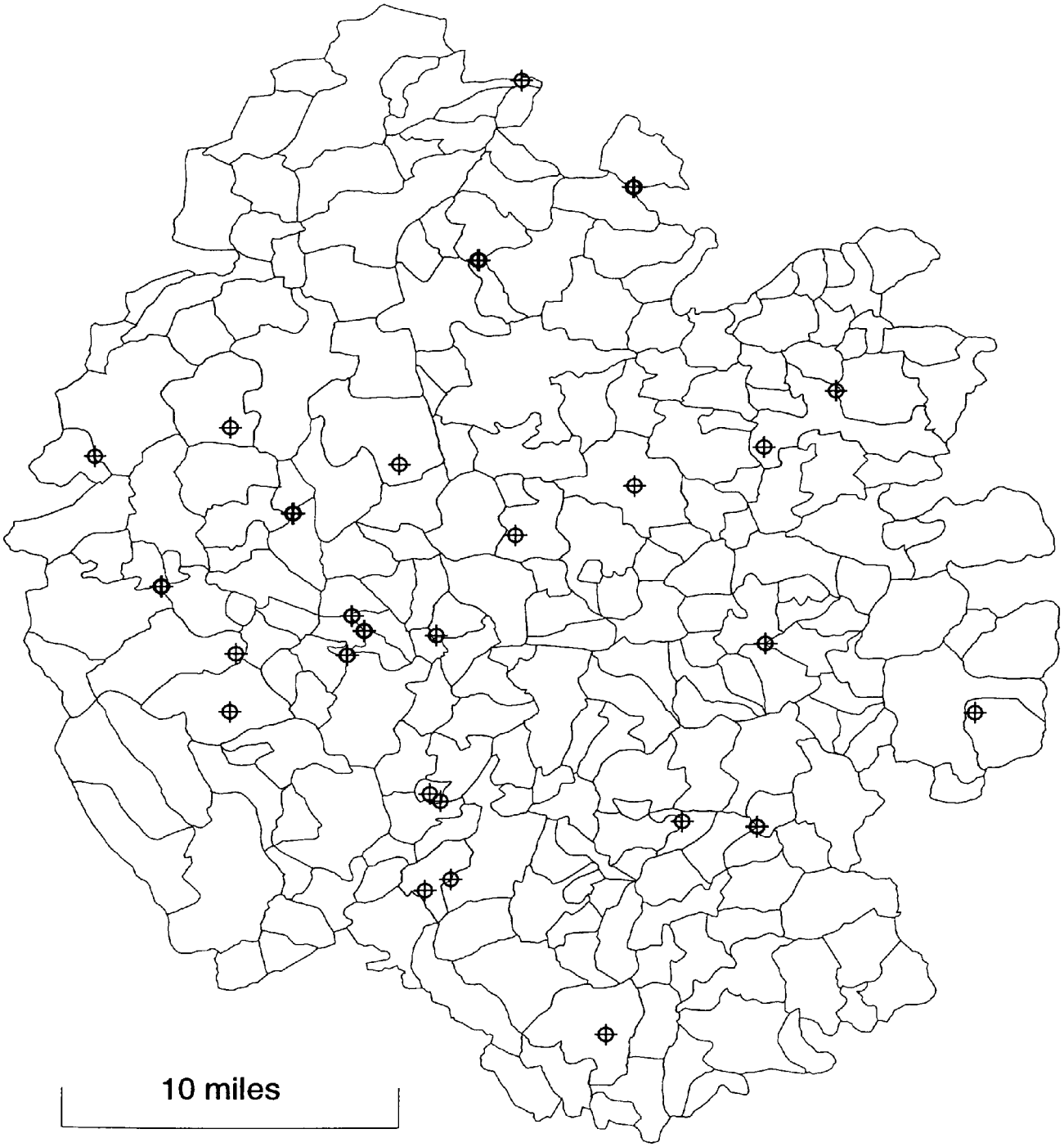
[171] Davies, *The Age of Conquest, op. cit.*, p. 164.

H52: Plaintiffs of Welsh origin, 1199-1507.



⊕ 1 transfer of land or property.

H53: Deforciants of Welsh origin, 1199-1507.



⊕ 1 transfer of land or property.

were engaged in sheep farming and had been for many generations. Pastoralism in these districts was probably a much slower-changing form of farming than the type common on the plains of Herefordshire.

4.8 Conclusion.

Feet of fines have proved to be a valuable source for the study of medieval Herefordshire. They have provided a vastly increased dataset of place-names and personal names. They have also allowed a much more countywide study of land use and settlement patterns in the county for a large part of the Middle Ages. Fines were issued in relation to all the regions of Herefordshire, despite being more limited in some of the more marginal regions, such as Ewias. Overall, the fines have revealed the dominance of central and eastern Herefordshire in terms of the greatest number of transactions. They have shown that those regions were very important arable districts in the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries. Western Herefordshire is revealed to have had transactions associated with more mixed farming at an earlier date than central and eastern Herefordshire. There is also evidence of new settlement occurring in the west throughout the period, whereas settlement probably reached its limit on the Central Plain and Eastern Plain by the early 1300s. The first half of the fourteenth century is the period of greatest activity in the Herefordshire series of fines and represents something of a watershed with a dramatic fall in activity from *c.* 1350. By the early fifteenth century there is dramatic change apparent with the districts formerly dominated by arable production adopting more

mixed farming methods highlighted by increases in the amount of meadow and pasture transferred in these areas. During this period of change southern Herefordshire emerges as an important arable district. The data has also revealed the importance of the Woolhope Region, which seems to have pre-empted the changes that occurred in central and eastern Herefordshire.

The data shows a great increase in the number of fines issued in the first half of the fourteenth century and there is a correlation between the rise in the number of fines issued and the worst years of the famine of the early fourteenth century. The great changes apparent from the mid fourteenth century may be due, in part, to the upheavals associated with the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century with a drastic fall in population leading to a fall in the amount of land under the plough.

Evidence of "minimal boroughs" has been shown to be much less significant in Herefordshire than in Essex, for instance, although there is evidence of suburbs developing around Hereford in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The evidence for Welsh people in fines seems to indicate that most of them were based in the western parts of Herefordshire, and were probably primarily involved in pastoral farming in the marginal regions such as Ewias or were, perhaps, using their own methods of conveyance in districts such as Archenfield.

Chapter 5

Shropshire in the Feet of Fines.

This chapter examines the data provided by the medieval feet of fines for Shropshire. There are a total of 1440 documents for the period 1196-1508. The first fine in the series was issued at Westminster in the eighth year of the reign of Richard I. It records the surrender of a third part of the land of Knokyn from Thomas Noel and his wife, Margaret, to John Lestrange.[1] The last fine was issued at Westminster in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Henry VII. It records the transfer of the manors of Alkmond and Berwick (near Shrewsbury) along with 26 messuages, ten tofts, 300 acres of arable, 40 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 20 acres of wood and 100/- rent in Alkmond, Newton and Great and Little Berwick, from Sir Edmund Lucy and Eleanor, his wife, to Robert Brudenell, Thomas Pulteney, Thomas Pygot, William Marshall, William Westerdale, William Bathon (chaplain), Clement East and Gerard Guyow.[2] The data will be used to examine landscape themes and settlement patterns, such as the emergence of regions and patterns of land-use. The various land types mentioned in the documents will be analysed to show the importance of particular types of agriculture in the various regions of the county. The chapter begins with a regional survey based on other sources, and will then show how the fines can be used to provide a detailed, long term, data-set for the required study. The chapter will include a series of tables, graphs and maps, generated from the fine

[1] PRO: CP25/1/193/1/1.

[2] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/20.

data, which will display changes over time and show the effects of historical processes on the landscape.

5.1 Regional Survey (see map S1).

The following survey is based on the eight physical regions identified by Rowley and on the regional summary he describes in the *Victoria County History.*[3]

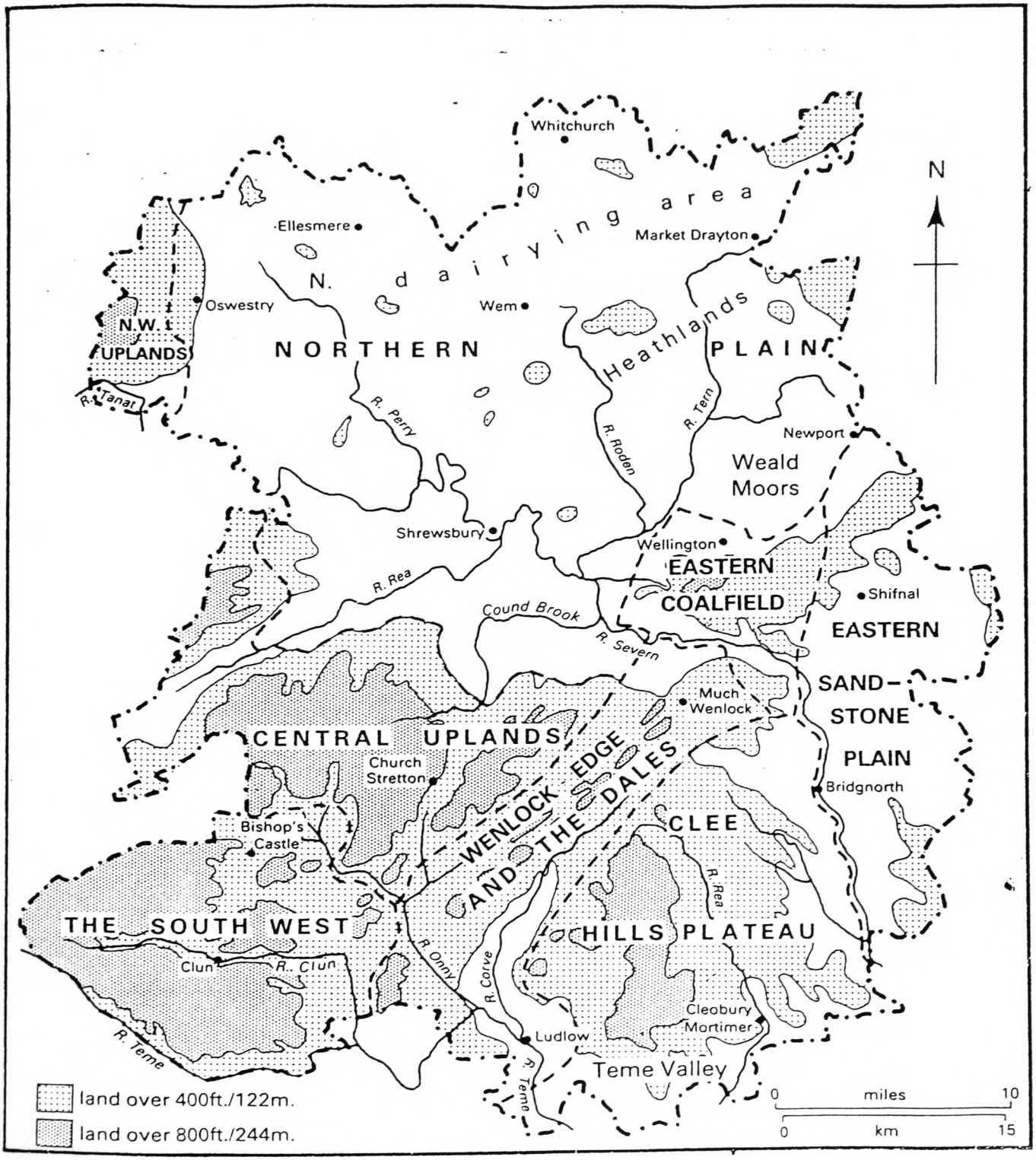
Rowley has noted that Shropshire is divided between north and south by the River Severn which drains most of the county as it flows to the southeast.[4] To the west and south of the Severn there is an upland region of Palaeozoic rocks. Rowley has said that these rocks form most of the Welsh border hills and, furthermore, in the west include the eastern section of a central Welsh plateau.[5] The relief consists of hills and ridges or edges that are cut across with dales and are drained by rivers, streams and brooks. There is a plateau to the west of this area which is divided by the River Clun. A contrasting landscape is apparent in northern Shropshire. Rowley has linked this area to a wider region incorporating parts of Cheshire and Staffordshire and representative of one of the primary "lowland districts in highland Britain".[6] He has explained how in the Mesozoic period the plain was formed by the collapse of the Palaeozoic base. Parts of the plain are interspersed with sandstone hills but, Rowley has stated, these hills do not essentially alter the landscape which, he believes, is characteristic of the gently undulating region of the

[3] T. Rowley, 'The Physical Environment', *The Victoria History of Shropshire,* Vol. IV, ed. G. C. Baugh, (Oxford, 1989), pp. 5-20.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

S1: Shropshire regions (after Rowley.)



English Midlands.[7] There is one very different section in the extreme northwest where the Berwyn Mountains begin to rise, causing a dramatic change as the plain transforms into a characteristically Welsh upland area.[8]

Rowley has claimed that most of the geological periods are apparent in the Shropshire landscape. He says that although the underlying solid or drift geology usually influences the upper soil coverage, other factors such as vegetation, relief and climate can lead to different soils appearing on similar rocks.[9] He says that western Shropshire, in particular the upland regions, has notably more rainfall than the eastern parts of the county which contain generally lighter, better drained soils.[10]

In terms of relief, Rowley has concluded, there are problems associated with dividing the county into natural regions. He emphasizes the need for the consideration of factors such as geology, relief, soils, climate and drainage, to enable a more precise evaluation of the Shropshire landscape. He has noted eight major regions and a number of sub-regions.[11]

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

5.1a South Shropshire.

There are many idiosyncratic sub-regions apparent in South Shropshire. Rowley has made a broad distinction between the regions flanked by the Worcestershire border and the Stretton Hills and those further to the west which extend to the Welsh border.[12]

5.1a(i) The Clee Hills Plateau.

In geological terms this region is made up of the eastern extremities of the Welsh border hills, a district of Old Red Sandstone which has created a wide triangular-shaped plateau near the peaks of the Clee Hills which, at almost 1800 feet above sea level, are the highest points in the county. Volcanic dolerite or basalt cap these hills, the bases of which are created from outcrops of Carboniferous Millstone Grit and Lower and Middle Coal Measures.[13]

Leached brown soils are characteristic on the plateau, which is described by Moulder as "anything but flat."[14] There is a danger of water logging due to the occasional presence of gley although some natural drainage is provided by the porous underlying rock. Rowley has noted that there is little drift on the plateau a situation that, when combined with the decomposition and weathering of sandstone into marl, produces "silty

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[14] M. Moulder, *A Shell Guide to Shropshire,* (second edn., London, 1973), p. 15.

loam over silty clay loam."[15] He maintains that rich brown earths can be discovered at altitudes of 1100 feet on the Brown Clee.[16]

Rowley has claimed that early settlement in this region tended to be confined to the summits of the hills and in the valleys, although he pointed out that the plateau itself was capable of the cultivation of grass and cereals.[17] On the Clee summits he recognized areas of podzolized soils and well-drained acid-brown soils but noted that when other thin, infertile and shallow soils are combined with the high altitude and the steep slopes of the district, the result is poor vegetation and an environment suitable only for rough moorland grazing. Rowley has emphasized the difficulties of working this environment by stating that much of the land was still unenclosed in the 1980s.[18]

Rowley has claimed that a "cattle-corn economy" predominated in South Shropshire until the late eighteenth century, primarily confined to the valleys. He has noted the expansion of arable in the region between 1793 and 1815 due to the need for more homegrown cereals during the Napoleonic Wars although most of this arable was returned to grass following the slump in the price of corn in the late eighteenth century. Before the return to grass the area became known, briefly, as the "Wheatland" to distinguish it from the "Ryeland" to the east of the River Severn.[19]

Where the southern slopes of the plateau dip down into the Teme valley a significant sub-region (which was to become linked with the Herefordshire and

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[15] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp.6-7.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Worcestershire cereal and fruit growing district) emerges.[20] The geology and soil of this district are identical to those of the plateau but Rowley has claimed that the fact that this area has a southerly aspect probably encouraged the move towards mixed farming, which, he claims, had been achieved by the mid eighteenth century.[21] He noted that orchards were a fairly common feature of this locale by the twentieth century and that some dairy farming was possible on the favourable meadows of the South Rea and Teme valleys.[22]

5.1a(ii) Wenlock Edge & The Dales.

This region, one of very varied relief, comprises the land between the south Shropshire uplands and southwest Shropshire in the west and the Clee Hills Plateau in the east. Problems associated with poor drainage mean that even today some districts have extensive tracts of open waste. On the other hand there are areas with extensive acreages suitable for profitable arable production. The region is traditionally well settled and has a topography comprising a recurring band of scarps routinely dissecting by streams.[23] The Old Red Sandstone that emerges from the western escarpment of the Clee Hills Plateau forms the base of Corve Dale which is bounded to the west by the Bringewood Beds, an escarpment of Aymestry Limestone. Further to the west lies the steep valley of Hope Dale which is based on beds of Lower Ludlow shales which are older and softer than those in Corve Dale. Forming a straight ridge above Hope Dale and Ape Dale is Wenlock Edge

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 7..

which runs from Craven Arms to Much Wenlock. Its scarps, which are heavily wooded, climb to an altitude of around 1000 feet and create what can be a very harsh environment.[24] In recent times Moulder has described the district as containing "well-wooded slopes with beeches and mixed plantations" that give way to "rolling, dusty, yellow-grey fields sown with wheat and barley or green luxuriant pastures for fattening sheep in beautiful Ape Dale or Corve Dale."[25]

Rowley has stated that Corve Dale has traditionally been a well settled and favoured area within southern Shropshire. He says that mixed farming was beginning to make major inroads in this district by the mid seventeenth century whereas in other districts there was a "persistence" of large arable acreages and open fields. He claims that in the early nineteenth century Corve Dale farmers were, as a rule, more wealthy than those on the Clee plateau.[26]

5.1a(iii) The East Shropshire Coalfield.

This region (also known as the Wrekin) despite being located towards the north of the county has geology and relief that is more akin to the south. The Wrekin summit, at 1343 feet, is the highest point of a rolling plateau which is generally over 400 feet above sea level. The region also contains prolific coal measures that stretch northwards from Shirlett to Lilleshall. Rowley has noted that these measures create a distinctive landscape

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[25] Moulder, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[26] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

around the area of the Severn Gorge, between the plains of east and north Shropshire.[27] As well as coal, other natural resources such as ironstone, refractory clays and limestone abound in the coalfield creating an environment well suited to industrial exploitation. Rowley has stated that the main drift cover is boulder clay and that much of the district of the coal measures has acid-brown gley soils and is covered by surface water.[28] He says that drainage is poor in some districts and good in others, and that overall the soil that characterizes the region is a sandy loam.[29] The area was densely wooded in medieval times and had a wood pasture economy and although industrialisation drastically changed parts of the landscape, particularly around Dawley and Oakengates in the centre of the region, large tracts of woodland remain today and away from the coalfield the landscape remained essentially rural in character.[30]

5.1a(iv) The Central Uplands.

This is a region of very diverse landscapes. To the west of the Plaish Valley and Ape Dale there is a watershed which demarks the eastern boundary of this region which continues west, beyond the Shelve Plateau, to the Welsh border. Its northern boundary is near Pontesbury and its southern one is around Linley and Wistanstow.[31] Rowley has stated that this region is made up of some of Britain's oldest rocks with most of the

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 9..

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

landscape lying at an altitude of over 600 feet and much of it up to 1000 feet. He mentions the line of "whale-backed" volcanic hills that run along the Church Stretton Fault and into rich valleys to the both sides of the Long Mynd which itself provides a contrasting environment of an open plateau in a bleak upland situation as it joins the Shelve area and the district of the Stiperstones ridge. He maintains that the diversity of the region is primarily due to the underlying beds of rock.[32]

Unenclosed rough pasture is characteristic of the land between the Stiperstones and the Shelve Plateau although there is some open moorland and heath in some parts of this district. Although much of the region is barren upland Rowley has said that wheat can be grown in the lower districts such as the productive Stretton Dale and the upper Rea Valley. These districts can support mixed farming although overall the economy of the region is based on stock rearing, primarily sheep husbandry.[33] Rowley has claimed that settlement in this region has always been sparse with small villages widely scattered throughout.[34] Indeed, Hooke has noted the disputes that were prevalent in the upland areas of Shropshire due to a failure to adequately demark parish boundaries because of the bleak environment and the low population. She suggests that such disputes continued throughout the Middle Ages and into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and claims that on the Long Mynd the quarrels were concerned with which parishes could make use of the hill grazing in that district.[35]

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[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

[35] D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England*, (Leicester University Press, 1998), p. 78.

5.1a(v) South-West Shropshire.

Grass pasture and moorland are characteristic of this isolated upland region, trees and hedges generally being confined to the less windy valleys (except in this century which has seen extensive conifer plantations in the west of the region). Many of its place-names are of Welsh origin because even in the Middle Ages much of the region was in Wales. Hooke has said that until the eighteenth century some of the mountain tops near the Welsh border were still only roughly partitioned and "heaps of stones were often put along the boundary on the open uplands in an effort to mark the lines where other distinctive landmark features were few."[36] Rowley has noted that the series of broad-backed ridges apparent in the region were formed by the river systems of the Teme and Clun which cut a deep swathe through the plateau and are further divided by a number of precipitous constricted valleys. He reveals that these rivers drain the region in the south as the Camlad does in the north and maintains that the slopes of the area are moderate to steep with the higher summits linking with the plateau surface. He points out that Beacon Hill, which is actually in Radnorshire, is the highest point of this region, climbing to 1800 feet and providing something of a contrast to the east of the region where the landscape is somewhat more gentle as it breaks into a sequence of secluded smooth hills.[37]

Rowley has noted that the acid-brown soils which characterize the region are of a silt loam texture and, because they are generally well-drained, cultivation is possible in the upland areas between about 800 and 1200 feet. He has noted significant evidence of

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[37] Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

prehistoric settlement in this region but has said that in more recent times the highest areas have been mainly used for sheep farming, an activity that has remained the mainstay of the agricultural economy of this region for many generations.[38] The main settlements in medieval times were concentrated at Bishop's Castle and Clun. Rowley has suggested that this was due to the valleys of the Teme and its tributaries providing access to the middle march and the upland. He says that outside these centres, isolated farmsteads are indicative of the low settlement and population figures of this region.[39]

Moulder has described the uplands of south and west Shropshire thus:

> "The character of the upland landscape changes over the four parts of which it is composed. Wildest of all is the district around Shelve, close to the Welsh border . . . On and up across rock-strewn moorland are the Stiperstones, which 'stand out of the hill at short intervals . . .' Immediately to the east . . . is the valley of the East Onny river, green against the bracken of the almost sheer face of the Long Mynd beyond which the upland mass continues. . . The more or less level summit rises to 1,696 feet at Pole Bank, and its ten-mile length is traversed by a medieval track known as the Portway . . . Where the hills sweep down towards Church Stretton they are broken up by a series of ravines . . . each with its own little stream . . . north of the Severn . . . the isolated hump of the Wrekin . . .dominates the landscape for miles around . . . To the south. . . lies the Clun Forest. . . much dissected by its own streams . . . Although this is called a forest . . . many thousands of acres are wild moorland."[40]

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[40] Moulder, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

5.1b North Shropshire.

The regions to the east and north of the Severn which make up North Shropshire have a much more uniform relief and geology than their southern counterparts. The most noticeable contrast is there is little land over 400 feet above sea level. Rowley has suggested that the sub-regions in the north are more easily identified than in the south because they have a less complex topography and geology.[41]

5.1b(i) The Eastern Sandstone Plain.

Rowley has suggested that the lush sandstone landscape of this region, which is mostly below 400 feet and consists of spacious areas of level land, dissected by deeply bedded streams, lightly undulating hills and areas of "hummocky glacial terrain", has much in common with the geology of the West Midlands.[42] Indeed, he reveals that in the eleventh century much of the region was in Staffordshire and says that in terms of geology and soil structure it has little similarities with the upland areas of western Shropshire.[43] He states that annual rainfall is lower than in the west and there are more hours of sunlight and higher temperatures on average.[44] One of the problems relating to the soils of this region is their poor water retention. Rowley has suggested that this is mainly due to the great amounts of original sandstone combined with overlying sands and gravels that have

[41]Rowley, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

created a high proportion of light, sandy, acid-brown, podzolized soils.[45] He says that despite this problem, when properly managed, the soils are very suited to intensive agriculture and market gardening. Another problem, related to the poor water retaining qualities of the soils, is the general shortage of surface water in the region creating the ever-present danger of drought. This fact has meant that the area is less suited to permanent pasture, although Rowley has drawn attention to the notable patches of heath that, he says, were formed as the result of woodland clearances.[46]

The region was originally part of a great wooded area that covered much of the West Midlands between Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Much of the region remained heavily wooded until the post-medieval period. Rowley has claimed that the creation of the Royal Forest of Morfe in Norman times inhibited settlement; he has suggested that the evidence of small moated medieval farms and shrunken villages in the region is indicative of limited settlement and minor degrees of land reclamation in a marginal forest or heathland situation.[47] He has recognized that there were some sizeable and flourishing villages such as Alveley, Claverley and Worfield.[48] The most dramatic change recognized by Rowley occurred in the eighteenth century. By this time the woodland nature of Morfe Forest was lost, replaced mainly by scrub-heath, and the region came to be known as the Ryeland because its dry and sandy soils were well suited for the production of rye and

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

barley. He has stated that in recent centuries the region has become the most "distinctly arable" area of Shropshire.[49]

5.1b(ii) The Northern Plain.

This distinctive region consists of an essentially level landscape between 250 and 350 feet interrupted only by a few small hills of Red Sandstone that help create a gently rolling countryside. Although the relief is very similar, Rowley has noted that there is variation in this region in terms of glaciation, the soils and the present landscape.[50] He has noted how the plain has areas of both arable and pasture along with "extremes of wild fenland vegetation and heathlands".[51] There is a noticeable sub-region in the district of the Severn Gorge in the south of the region where the River Severn flows into the eastern coalfield. Rowley has noted how the fertile deposits created by the flooding of the river in this district have influenced settlement patterns and agriculture.[52]

In the fenland districts of the Northern Plain, such as the meres around Ellesmere, peat cutting is the traditional industry. Overall, the nature of the soils of the region, which Rowley has described as "heavy textured and loamy with poor drainage qualities", has been determined mainly by drift.[53] He has said that, traditionally, these soils, which cover a large area of North Shropshire, have been used for pastoral farming although he explains

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[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

that they can be made suitable for the cultivation of wheat with careful management and drainage.[54] The soil produces rich green grassland which in modern times has supported enormous herds of Friesian cows that have traditionally supplied milk to the West Midlands.[55]

Rowley has examined the development of the various districts of this region and has claimed that from the late sixteenth century thousands of acres on the Weald Moors were enclosed and improved and the district became notable for livestock fattening. The area around Whitchurch in the extreme north developed into an important dairying district in the seventeenth century whereas the rich soil around Welshampton encouraged extensive arable cultivation as did the light loamy sands of the flood plain of the River Severn which, according to Rowley, has attracted among the most intense agricultural activity in Shropshire since the earliest times despite noting that settlement on the flood plain itself has been limited.[56] He has noted that in the present day the region retains its rural character and is quite sparsely populated.[57]

5.1b(iii) The North-West Uplands.

Rowley has emphasized the "distinctly Welsh character" of this region which, he suggests, is more noticeable than in any other region of the county and is characterized by a hilly geography, scattered farms used for pastoral farming and small cottages built of

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

[55] Moulder, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[56] Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

stone.[58] The uplands are the eastern extremities of the Welsh Plateau which terminates in the form of steep scarp slopes to the north of the region but just outside the county. In the east the land is about 260 feet above sea level but climbs sharply to the west reaching an altitude of almost 1000 feet on the Welsh border.[59] Rowley has noted that the erratic hilly terrain, characterized by deeply cut, wide based valleys, was caused by concentrated glaciation in the area.[60] He has also claimed that the region has a higher average amount of rainfall than the county as a whole and that the soils are primarily acid-brown, being based on Carboniferous Sandstones. These soils are primarily shallow and strong and, on the ridges and the steepest slopes, are very well drained. These conditions have established an environment well suited to the production of a fine grass yield which has mainly been used for stock rearing, although the most exposed summits can only sustain rough grazing.[61] Rowley has explained that the generally infertile nature of the soils along with the hilly relief has placed limits on the amount of intense agricultural activity possible in the region.[62]

Saunders has identified eight regions broadly similar to those identified by Rowley above.[63] Map S2 shows the regions used by Saunders. Map S3 shows the relief. His regional map has been used as the basis for the regions identified on the maps displaying the fine evidence.

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

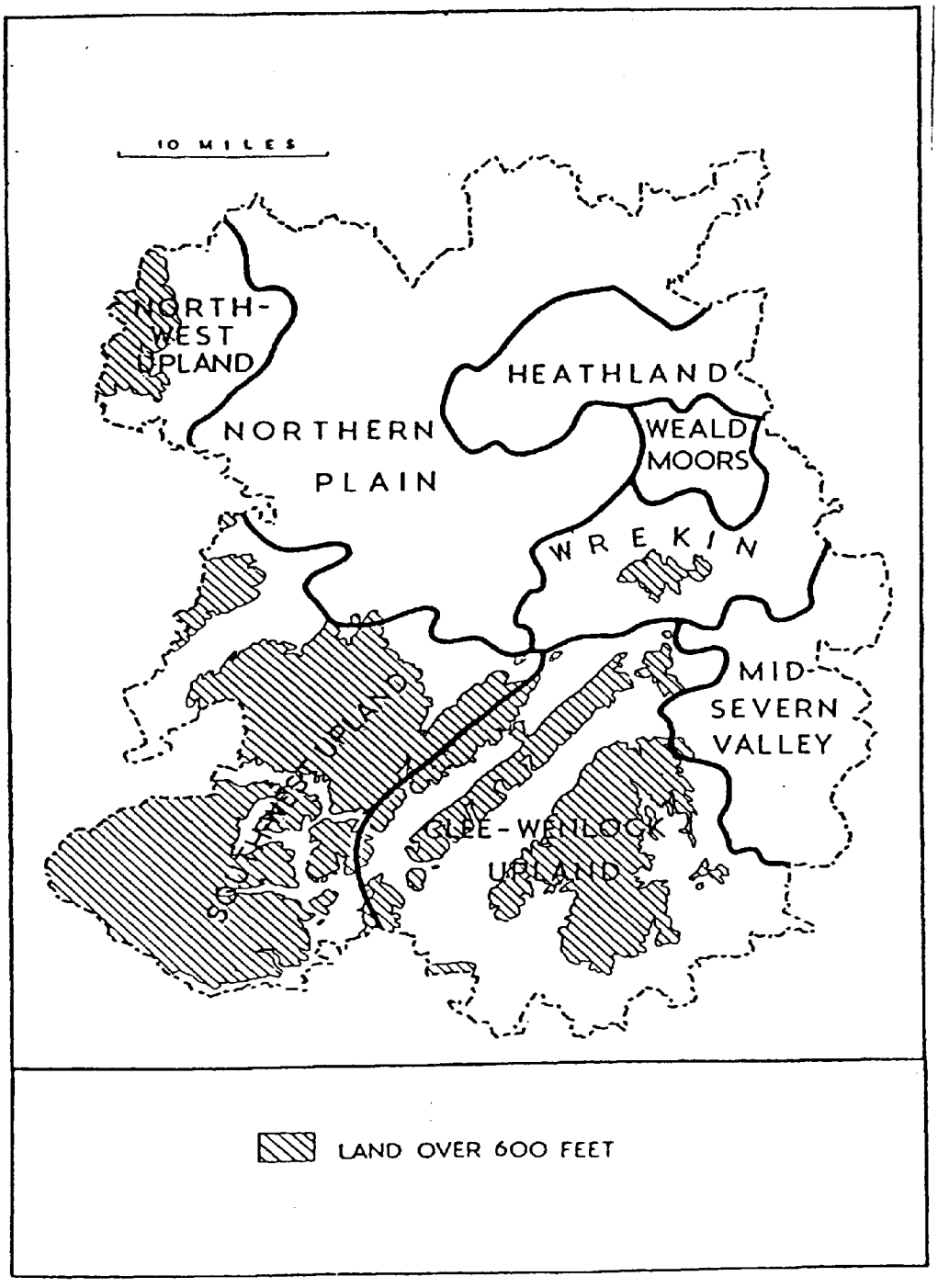
[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

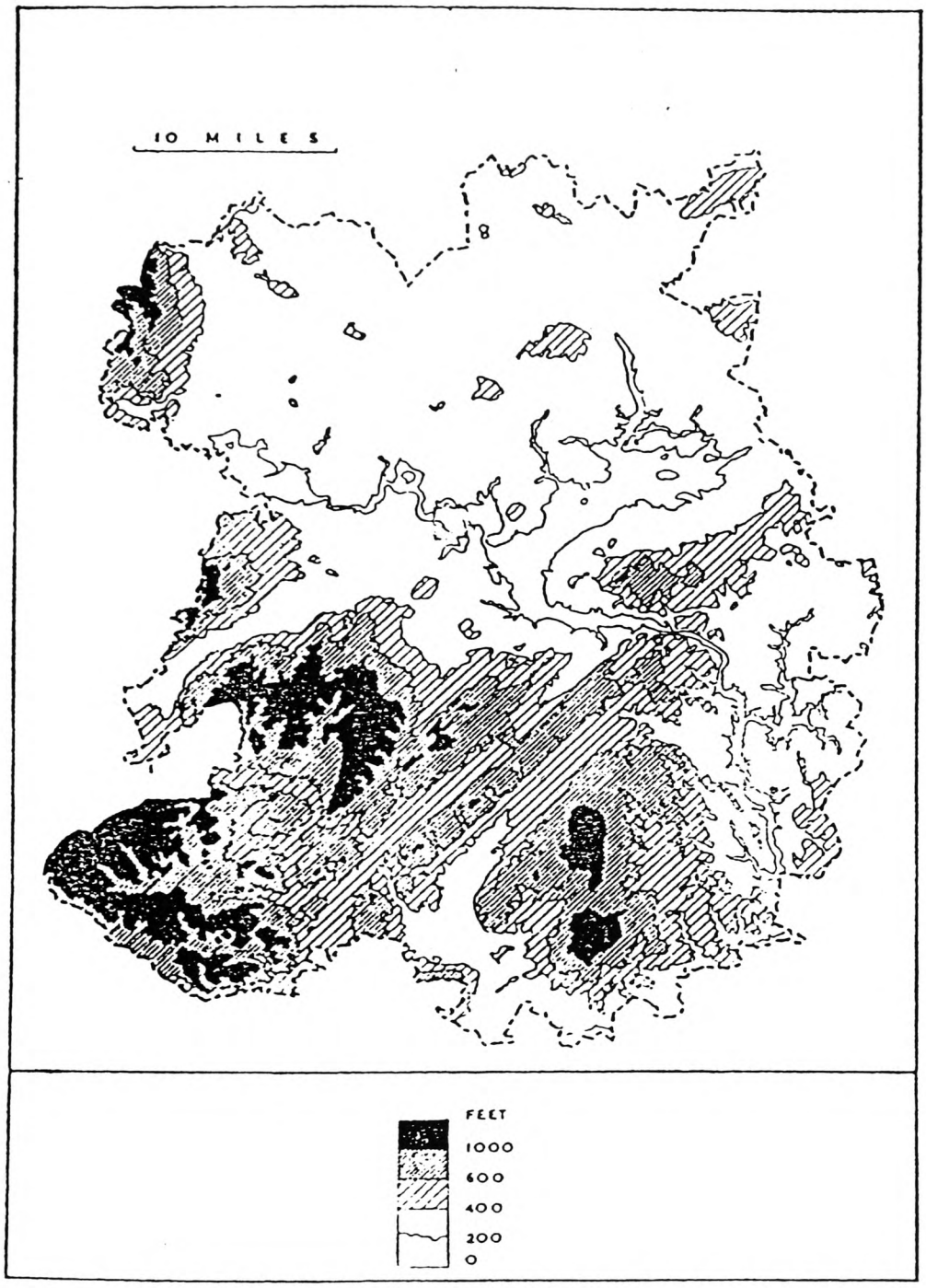
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[63] V. A. Saunders, 'Shropshire', *The Domesday Geography of Midland England,* ed. H. C. Darby and I. B. Terret, (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1971), pp. 115-155.

S2: Shropshire regions (after Saunders.)



S3: Shropshire relief (after Saunders.)



5.2 Agriculture and settlement.

With the exception of the Domesday evidence, little is known about late Saxon Shropshire. Stamper has suggested that some, and possibly all, settlements were grouped in units of administration and lordship. He believes it likely that a growing population and an increasing demand for food led to new land being brought into cultivation. He claims that the arrival of Norman manorial reorganization probably provided the impetus for the evolution of "nucleated settlements and the open-field system."[64] Prior to the Domesday survey much of the county, particularly the west, had been subjected to extensive devastation due to Welsh raids and the conflicts of the early years of the Norman takeover.[65] Between 1039 and 1063 the powerful Welsh king, Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was a constant threat along the whole of the border between Wales and England. He was responsible for much of the devastation.[66] The emphatic crushing of the rising led by Edric the Wild in 1069-70, at the order of William the Conqueror, led to further devastation of the Shropshire countryside, with the indiscriminate wasting of vills.[67]

Care is needed when assessing the evidence as stated in the *Domesday Geography* volumes, particularly with regards to the size and pattern of settlements, as much of the findings are now considered out of date. However, the belief that the most highly settled areas were the fertile valleys of the Severn and the Corve seems reasonable enough.

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[64] Stamper, 'Early Agriculture' & 'Domesday Book to 1300', *The Victoria History of Shropshire,* ed. G. C. Baugh, *op. cit.,* p. 25.

[65] S. Harvey, 'Domesday England', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. II, *1042-1350,* ed. H. E. Hallam, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 135.

[66] T. M. Davies, *Gruffudd ap Llywelyn: an eleventh century king,* (Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Wales, Cardiff, 1994).

[67] D. C. Cox, 'County Government in the Early Middle Ages', *The Victoria History of Shropshire,* Vol.I, ed. G. C. Baugh, (Oxford, 1979), p. 7.

Stamper has attempted a more recent study of the period between the Domesday survey and 1300 and has claimed that it was a period of growth in population, food production and in the area of land under the plough.[68] Although some parts of England were already involved in intensive arable farming in 1066, Shropshire, except for a few small areas where watercourses ensured fertile and well-drained soil, consisted of regions devoted to pastoral farming.[69] In the centuries prior to 1300 the landscape of Shropshire underwent great changes; the area of grazing land increased and there were great advances in arable cultivation.[70] He has stated that Shropshire was a distinctive region and that in the eleventh century "large tracts of lightly populated land survived . . . where the characteristic agriculture was pastoral and widely dispersed."[71] However, by the early fourteenth century more of the county was under the plough than ever before and other land such as woods, moors and pastures were "more widely managed and regulated than at any stage in the past."[72]

Stamper's consideration of the Domesday evidence has involved land values; a set of data that was not plotted in the *Domesday Geography* series. He believes that this data can be used to show "regional variations in the evolution of agriculture within the county in the late eleventh century."[73] Before using the data he reflects on the devastation of much of eastern Shropshire by William the Conqueror in 1070 which disrupted economic

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[68] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 26; Hallam, ' England before the Norman Conquest', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

[70] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

activity and depressed manorial values. He also mentions the wasted areas in the west of the county in the formerly Welsh districts. With these qualifications in mind he has discovered that the "most valuable manors were clearly concentrated east of Shrewsbury, between it, Edgmond, and Albrighton, and to a lesser extent west of Shrewsbury."[74] Stamper has shown how careful analysis of the Domesday data can reveal regional trends. For example land value was not necessarily linked to the amount of arable in areas where pastoral farming was of great importance. Saunders had concluded that the district around Clun was thinly populated with a small number of ploughteams at work.[75] Therefore, one might expect this region to have been economically poor. However, Stamper has noted the high value of land in the Clun area in 1066 and suggests that the importance of sheep husbandry may well be the reason.[76] Overall, Stamper has concluded that the evidence of Domesday land values, ploughteams and ploughlands all "indicate the relative poverty and lack of agricultural development in the northern third of the county."[77]

Kettle has commented on the complexities inherent in Shropshire agriculture in the later Middle Ages.[78] She has said that although the period from the mid fourteenth century to the last quarter of the fifteenth century has traditionally been viewed as a period of depression in agrarian society, punctuated by crises, the geographical position and physical make-up of Shropshire has meant that it was affected in different ways than other Midland counties. Although a series of crises did cause problems in Shropshire in this period,

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[74] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[75] Saunders, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-155.

[76] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[78] A. J. Kettle, '1300-1540', *The Victoria County History of Shropshire,* Vol. IV, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-119.

Kettle has argued that they did not lead to major changes of direction and there was less need for readjustment and less scope for expansion and technological advance.[79] The mixed nature of farming, which became an important characteristic, and especially the balance between arable and pastoral farming depended less on market forces and more on individual circumstances. Owen has claimed that the extant sources for the later medieval period "clearly indicate that mixed farming, with a variable arable/pastoral content, was widely practiced."[80] He maintains that the "close relationship between the two agrarian processes is illustrated by the premium placed on meadowlands by both the arable and pastoral farmer."[81]

There were plenty of opportunities for expansion of settlement and there is continued evidence, throughout the medieval period and beyond, for assarting and improvement of marginal land. In his assessment of population movements in the centuries after the Domesday Survey, Hallam has encountered something of an anomaly in the evidence for Shropshire. Overall, he found that the greatest population growth in England occurred in the "highland zone" of which Shropshire is very much a part. However, he discovered that it only doubled its numbers in the two hundred years following Domesday compared to much higher levels of expansion elsewhere (such as the five times growth in

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[80] D. H. Owen, 'Farming Techniques: Wales and the Marches, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. III, *1348-1500*, ed. E. Miller, (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 239.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

Herefordshire).[82] He believes that Shropshire was a poorer county than Herefordshire in the thirteenth century.[83]

Kettle has used the Lay Subsidy for 1327 to conclude that at that time the wealthiest area of Shropshire was the "Severn lowland around and to the west of Shrewsbury."[84] She also noted "relatively prosperous" districts around Bridgenorth and at lower Corve Dale, and also, possibly, around Newport in the east. She claims that the poorest areas at this time were the southern uplands and the southwest of the county.[85] Although Kettle has claimed that Shropshire was less affected by the long term effects of the agrarian depression of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries she has noted that it was one of the four areas from which large-scale abandonment of arable land was reported in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*.[86] The Black Death caused a further fall in the value of land. Kettle has described the last quarter of the fourteenth century as a "precarious period of prosperity" which was "shattered in many parts of the county by the events of the first decade of the fifteenth century."[87] She claims that the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr had a devastating effect in some areas and quotes an example from April 1404 whereby the inhabitants of Shropshire "complained that a third of the county had been sacked by the Welsh rebels and many of them had been forced to abandon their homes."[88]

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[82] Hallam, ' Population Movements', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 510-511.

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 534.

[84] Kettle, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

[85] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

Arable production.

Kettle has noted a great diversity in the organization and working of arable land in medieval Shropshire, relating to its cultural, as well as geophysical, differences.[89] Jack has described the difficulties in tracing settlement in the Welsh districts of the borderland due to the peculiarities of the laws of the March and the coexistence of Welsh and English customs.[90] Using estimates from Domesday statistics Stamper claims that in 1086 around 22% of Shropshire was under arable cultivation in comparison with over 50% of much of the Midlands and East Anglia and over 70% in regions such as north Gloucestershire and east Norfolk.[91] The highest ploughteam densities were in the Severn lowlands east and west of Shrewsbury. The regions with the lowest densities were in the southwest, the Central Uplands and the northern part of the county.[92] Stamper has found scant evidence for open field land in Shropshire before the mid thirteenth century. By this time he believes that open fields were as fully developed in form "if not always in extent" as they were ever to be.[93] In comparison to neighbouring Cheshire, Jack has claimed, in Shropshire "the evidence for open fields is much stronger, and because of the much more arable nature of much of the county, far more widespread."[94]

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[89] *Ibid.*, p. 48; Jack, 'Farming Techniques: Wales and the Marches', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-14; Thirsk, Review note: *The Victoria History of Shropshire,* Vol. IV, *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society,* LXVIII, pp. 119-20.

[90] Jack, 'New Settlement: Wales and the Marches', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

[91] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

[92] Saunders, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-35; Stamper, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-9.

[93] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[94] Jack, 'Farming Techniques' *op. cit.*, pp. 413-14

Kettle has analysed bailiff's accounts to assess demesne agriculture in Shropshire in the later Middle Ages. The small size of the arable demesnes had led her to the conclusion that "cereal production was on a minor scale and almost invariably subordinate to pastoral farming".[95] She has claimed that on most of the estates for which there are surviving records arable cultivation was primarily intended to produce grain and hay for consumption by the livestock rather than for sale at the market. She claims that sheep farming, wool production, horse breeding and the rearing and dairying of cattle were more suited to the general environment of the county and were less labour intensive.[96] Edwards's analysis of probate inventories has revealed that in the 1550s only eight out of the 297 holdings covered by such documents had "more assets in crops than in animals."[97] He claims that most farmers did grow some corn and production was above a subsistence level in a number of areas, especially on the eastern sandy regions and the district between the Severn and the Tern. Arable production increased in Shropshire the seventeenth century as more land was enclosed and a more flexible approach to husbandry developed.[98]

Owen (like Kettle) has noted that the forces of agricultural decline apparent in the later Middle Ages were exacerbated in border areas by political factors such as the Glyndŵr rising.[99] He claims that:

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[95] Kettle, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-119.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[97] Edwards, '1540-1750', *The Victoria County History of Shropshire,* Vol. IV, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-168.

[98] *Ibid.*

[99] Owen, 'Occupation of the Land: Wales and the Marches, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. III, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-104.

> "the depopulation and devastation of many localities led to a reduction in the extent of uncultivated land. Soils of marginal productive quality, which had been brought into cultivation as a consequence of the population explosion of the thirteenth century, were now abandoned and agrarian activity was increasingly concentrated on the richer and more productive lands."[100]

Feet of fines contain extensive evidence of arable transfers and can be used to help plot the course of change in this land type over time. It will be interesting to assess the most important arable areas in a county where pastoralism appears to have been the dominant factor in the economy.

Assarting and enclosure.

A major feature of the medieval period was woodland clearance and enclosure of common and waste, primarily for arable cultivation. Under the Norman kings much of Shropshire became subject to Forest Law. Gradually, however, the Crown's need for increased revenue, linked with the rise in demand for land, made the decline of the extent of forest unavoidable.[101] Stamper has studied the fines paid in the forest courts. He claims that by the early twelfth century fines for small assarts near forest vills had become in reality "licenses to assart", with little proof of opposition from the Crown.[102] Lords also added momentum to the process by providing incentives such as free tenure to new settlers and Jack has quoted evidence of monastic assarting in the county.[103] Consequently, by the late thirteenth century the extent of forest in Shropshire had been

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[100] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[101] Rowley, *The Landscape of the Welsh Marches* (London, 1986), pp. 151-53.

[102] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[103] Jack, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, pp. 264-265.

radically reduced. Furthermore, notable areas of heath, moor and wetlands had been transformed to arable land.[104] Stamper has attempted some assessment of the progress of assarting in the thirteenth century using evidence from rentals. However, he maintains that "accurate quantification is impossible apart from at the very local and usually short term level".[105] Kettle has claimed that the progress and pattern of assarting depended on local conditions. She recognizes that it was most apparent in the early years of the fourteenth century and, unlike in many other counties, continued into the later Middle Ages.[106]

Assarting in the later Middle Ages seems to have been particularly notable in the central and northern parts of the county. Jack has stated that assarting was "common enough in the Welsh hinterland of Shropshire in the fourteenth century, although almost certainly less significant than earlier and unverifiable expansion."[107] Owen has claimed that there was "considerable assarting activity" recorded in "several localities in Shropshire in the mid and late fourteenth century."[108] This is interesting because in many other parts of England the process seems to have ceased by around 1350. Owen has stated that the "enclosure of the open arable fields of Shropshire was largely effected from the sixteenth century onwards" and that "some fifteenth century examples of enclosure were associated with abandoned and decayed settlements."[109]

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[104] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

[105] *Ibid.* p. 44

[106] Kettle, *op. cit.*, p 80.

[107] Jack, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, p. 266.

[108] Owen, 'Occupation of the Land', *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[109] Owen, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 247.

Kettle has also noted the difficulties involved in accurately charting the evidence for this process.[110] Feet of fines contain evidence of woodland conveyances and, occasionally, of transfers of heath and moor over a long time span and on a countywide basis. Analysis of the statistics provided by the fine data can lead to more broad ranging evidence of assarting and enclosure.

Pastoral farming and stock rearing.

Stamper has used *Inquisitions post mortem*, in a sample area of 85 manors, to conclude that in the thirteenth century Shropshire had one of the lowest percentages of meadow in comparison with arable in the whole country.[111] He maintains that this situation is reflected in the relative land values for meadow and arable. He says that arable was generally valued at between 2d. and 4d. per acre, whereas an acre of meadow could be valued as highly as 3/- and rarely less than 1/-.[112] Despite the apparent scarcity of meadow, Shropshire had a very significant livestock economy. Extensive woodland pastures, permanent grassland and moor combined with plentiful upland grazing areas maintained this industry. These factors established a perfect environment for sheep husbandry which was the foremost attribute of Shropshire's pastoral economy. Most of the evidence for medieval sheep husbandry is from the thirteenth century but it is very likely that it had been a major element in the economy of the region for many generations. [113] Farmer has

[110] Kettle, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-85.

[111] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[112] *Ibid.* p. 53.

[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 54-58.

noted the high quality of Shropshire wool and its very high value in the fourteenth century.[114] Owen has shown that this situation continued in the fifteenth century with Shropshire and Herefordshire producing the "highest graded wool in 1454."[115] As in Herefordshire much of the wool was sent to other parts of the country for manufacture.

Owen has traced the rise of cattle rearing in Shropshire in the fifteenth century with an emphasis on dairying in the early part of the century and a move towards the production of beef towards the end of the century. He says that the "significance of cattle breeding in the economy of western Shropshire is denoted by the activities centred on the demesne pastures of the manor of Pontesbury. The danger of flooding in the low-lying lands of the Rea valley partly explains the emphasis in this area on cattle breeding rather than on sheep rearing."[116]

The common picture established by the extant evidence is that Shropshire has always been a distinctly pastoral county from the earliest times to the modern day. Fines contain evidence for meadow and pasture and the data can be analysed and compared with the other counties in this study to assess the relative importance of pastoralism and stock rearing in Shropshire. It will be interesting to assess whether the most important areas of pasture and meadow in the fines coincide with those areas that are traditionally considered to be strongly pastoral from other evidence.

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[114] D. L. Farmer, 'Prices and Wages', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.,* p. 756.

[115] Owen, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.,* p. 244.

[116] *Ibid.,* p. 243.

5.3 Problems associated with agriculture and settlement in Shropshire and possible uses of feet of fines.

The Shropshire feet of fines represent an invaluable source for the reconstruction of land use in the medieval period. The present evidence is quite limited in time and content. The need for a more intensive study has long been recognized.[117] The lack of an *English Place-Name Society* volume for Shropshire had proved to be a major obstacle to research. Margaret Gelling addressed the situation in the early 1990s.[118] This development, along with the publication of a volume in the *Victoria County History* series, devoted entirely to the history of agriculture in Shropshire has provided a sound basis for more intensive study.[119]

The data from the fines will be most valuable in providing the much-needed analysis of land use in Shropshire for the whole medieval period. The fines represent a long term, countywide data source. The data will be displayed at parish level and can be used to show trends on a regional and local basis. It will be interesting to plot the distribution of the various land types onto the maps to show changes over time. Stamper highlighted the problems with the sources for the assarting movement, and Joan Thirsk has raised the question as to where the new assarting settlers came from.[120] Woodland conveyances recorded in fines will provide a broader range of evidence for assarting. By

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[117] T. Rowley, *The Shropshire Landscape*, (1972), p. 7; F. C. Thorn, (eds.) *Domesday Book: Shropshire*, (Chichester, 1986), Note 2; Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

[118] M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Shropshire*, part 1, *The English Place-Name Society*, Vol. LXII, (1990); M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Shropshire*, part 2, *The English Place-Name Society*, Vol. LXIII, (1995).

[119] Baugh (ed.), *op. cit.*

[120] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 44; Thirsk, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

linking this evidence with the personal names in the documents, it may be possible to discover where the settlers were from. For example, in 1199, a fine issued at Westminster records the surrender of arable in Dorrington along with six acres of assart, from Sibill daughter of Einon and her son, John, to Richard son of William. It is possible that Sibill may have been of Welsh origin because of her father's name.[121] Fines will also show distributions of arable, meadow and pasture. It will then be possible to compare these distributions with those suggested by writers such as Stamper. Of particular interest will be the analysis of Shropshire's pastoral economy, as suggested by the fines. Also, it will be possible to analyse the data in the light of Kettle's investigation of fourteenth century deeds and extents. She believes that the evidence they provide suggests a vigorous land market in Shropshire, fuelled by a demand for small parcels of land and by "peasant mobility in the face of poverty and other misfortunes".[122]

The agrarian crisis of 1315-22 is a very significant historical event that must be considered. The evidence of this event for Shropshire is somewhat limited although it is clear that there was a buoyant demand for land in the early fourteenth century which may be indicative of the crisis. There is a need for assessment of the number of conveyances on a year-by-year basis. There is also evidence of the use of *prid*, the Welsh mortgage system in the Welsh districts of Shropshire.[123] This system allowed people to transfer land without permanently alienating it and made it possible to evade restrictions placed by the kindred or the lord on the alienation of land. Feet of fines provided similar advantages to those

[121] PRO: CP25/1/193/2/16.

[122] Kettle, '1300-1540', *The Victoria History of Shropshire*, Vol. IV, ed. G. C. Baugh, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

[123] Kettle, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

wishing to convey land and property. The fact that they are available for a long time span allows analysis from the late twelfth to the early sixteenth centuries and enables the assessment of processes such as the crisis of 1315-22 and the Black Death, 1349.

5.4 Shropshire feet of fines: Statistics and analysis.

The Shropshire feet of fines record a total of 114,668 acres of land. Of this figure it has been possible to identify the place-names, and therefore the parish identity for 101,865 acres. This represents a percentage figure of 88.8%. The percentage of identification is fairly evenly spread throughout the whole period as can be seen from the following table:

Table S1: Percentage of identified land in the Shropshire fines.

1196-1248	1249-1300	1301-1352	1353-1404	1405-1456	1457-1508
83%	86.7%	85.4%	94.7%	94.5%	88%

The following table displays land-type, the number of fines each land type occurs in, the number of times each land type is mentioned, the total acreages for each type, the percentages of the total acreages recorded and the average acreage of each land type, per mention and per fine.

Table S2: Shropshire feet of fines, 1196-1508. Numbers and average sizes of transactions involving each land type.

Land Type	Number of Fines	Total acreage	Times mentioned	Percentage of total	Average acreage mentioned.	Average acreage per document
Arable	887	83821	1435	73	58.4	95
Meadow	250	3484	426	3.04	8.1	14
Pasture	61	5301	157	4.62	33.7	87
Wood	137	8137	295	7.10	27.5	59
Heath	8	2981.5	36	2.60	82.8	372.5
Land	15	10800	26	9.42	415	720
Moor	17	75	18	0.07	4.1	4.4
Alder	2	12	2	0.01	6	6
Assart	4	56	4	0.05	14	14
Total		114668.5	2399	100		

This table reveals that some 73% of the total land transferred in the Shropshire fines is arable. This is noticeably less than the percentage recorded for Herefordshire which is 85%. One reason may be due to the larger number of Knight's Fees conveyed in Shropshire. The "land" mentioned (some 10,800 acres) might have contained large percentages of arable. Nevertheless, even when this factor is taken into account, there is a significantly lower percentage of arable overall in Shropshire than in Herefordshire (see chapter 4, table H2). This is in keeping with the regional analysis of each county that reveals Herefordshire as being a more important arable county than Shropshire in the medieval period. On the other hand, the percentage of wood in Shropshire (over 7%) is more than double that of Herefordshire (3.4%). The percentage of meadow is a little less in Shropshire, which has 3.4%, than in Herefordshire which has 4%. The percentage of pasture is slightly higher in Shropshire at 4.6% than Herefordshire at 4%. One interesting feature is the significant amounts of heath mentioned in Shropshire, compared to none in Herefordshire. Also the fines for Shropshire specifically mention assarts in four early documents.[124] It is necessary to analyse these figures over time to reveal a clearer picture of landscape change in medieval Shropshire.

[124] PRO: CP25/1/193/2/6; CP25/1/193/2/16; CP25/1/193/2/21; CP25/1/193/3/72.

Table S3: Transaction averages of fines that mention land of all types.

Years	Number of fines	Average number per year	Average total acreage per fine	Average acreage transferred per year
1196-1248	184	3.5	76.6	271
1249-1300	276	5.3	59.3	315
1301-1352	492	9.4	57.3	543
1353-1404	216	4.1	102.2	424
1405-1456	138	2.6	192	290
1457-1508	80	1.5	234.6	361
Totals	**1386**			

Most fines date from the first half of the period with a significant rise in the first half of the fourteenth century. The later fines involve transfers of much larger acreages.

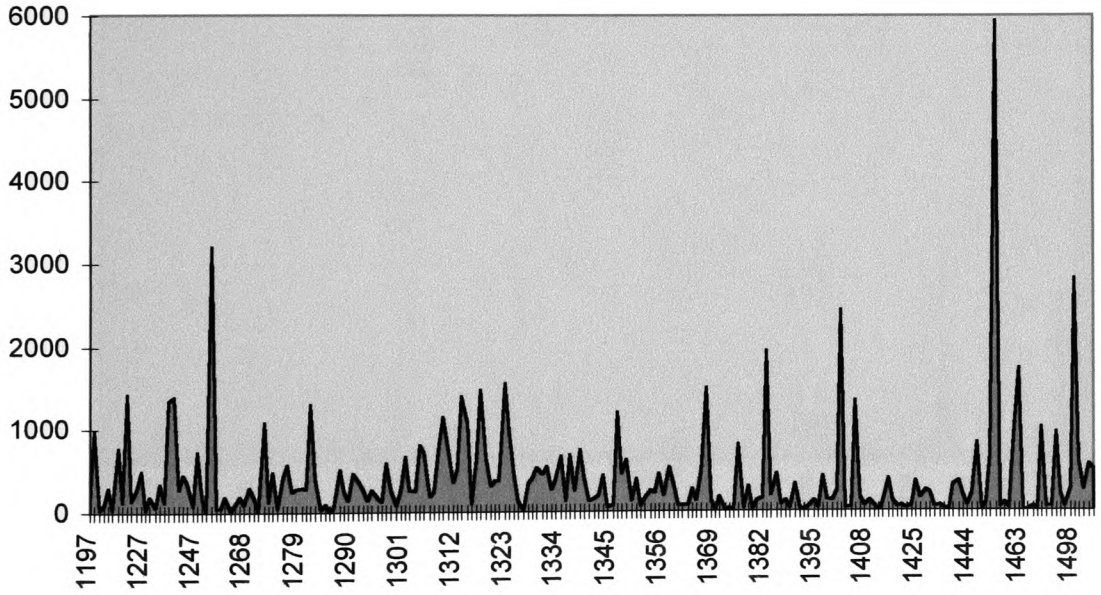
Table S4: Major land types over time.

	ARABLE		MEADOW		PASTURE		WOOD		TOTAL	
Years	No. of Fines	Avrg. Area	No. of Fines	Avrg. Area	No. of Fines	Avrg. Area	No. of Fines	Avrg. Area	No. of Fines	Avrg. Area
1196-1248	157	49.5	4	1	1	0	6	11.7	184	76.6
1249-1300	235	42.8	24	4.8	1	10	15	61.2	276	59.3
1301-1352	294	53.5	109	4	16	11.9	57	10.8	492	57.3
1353-1404	120	50.9	52	4.2	11	34.9	23	50.2	216	102.2
1405-1456	55	114.6	41	8	18	13.6	19	19.1	138	109.2
1457-1508	25	131	20	29	14	58.2	17	36.9	80	234.6

This table reveals a number of interesting trends. Until the fifteenth century, the average area of arable and meadow conveyed remains fairly uniform. There is a sharp rise

from 1400-1508. There is an increase in the average area of pasture transferred in the second half of the fourteenth century, and again in the later fifteenth century. There is a distinct increase in the number of woodland conveyances in the first half of the fourteenth century. There are noticeable peaks in the average area of woodland transferred in the second half of the thirteenth century and the second half of the fourteenth century. The following graphs show peaks and falls in land-use and types over time:

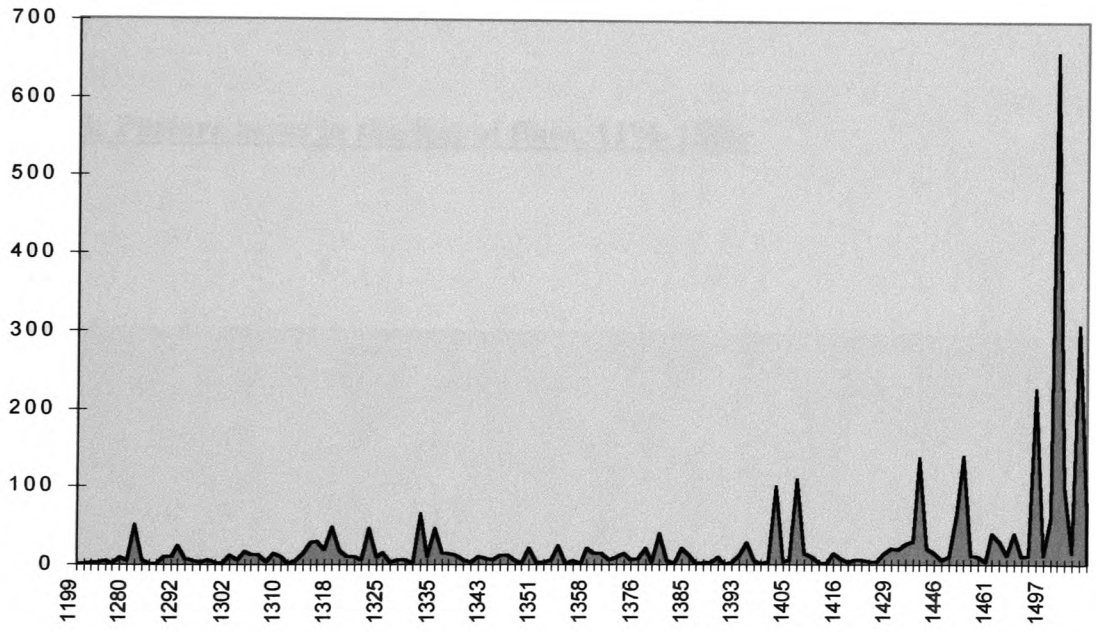
Graph S1: Arable acres in the feet of fines, 1196-1508.



There are particularly high peaks in 1255 and 1453. There were an especially high number of fines issued in 1255 (49) but a single fine issued in 1463 involved the transfer of

50 carucates of arable in 11 places to William Boerley and Margaret, his wife from Thomas Acton.[125] Therefore, while the first peak was the result of multiple transfers, the year with the highest recorded amount of arable was due to one single document. The most significant sustained rise in arable conveyance suggested by the above graph was in the period *c.*1310-1323.

Graph S2: Meadow acres in the feet of fines, 1196-1508.

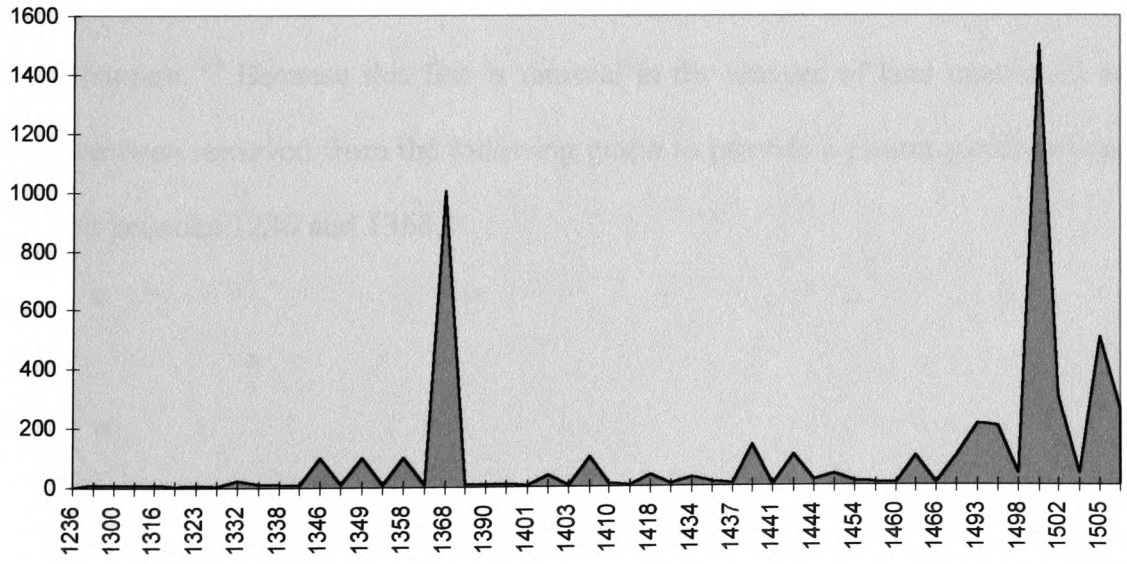


The first fine to mention meadow was in 1199. It was issued in Shrewsbury and

[125] PRO: CP25/1/195/22/41.

involved the transfer of one acre, along with 44 acres of arable, in Walltown and Lee, from Henry Haer to Gilbert de Cote and his wife, Matilda.[126] There is a rise in the amount of fines containing meadow between 1315 and 1319 and a smaller one between about 1330 and 1340. There is another rise in the early years of the fifteenth century. The biggest increase in the amount of meadow transferred was in the later sixteenth century, primarily due to an increase in the average acreage of meadow per fine (see table S4). For example, in 1505 Edmund Acton and Richard Hassell obtained 300 acres along with the manor of Cressage, 30 messuages, 500 acres of pasture, 500 acres of arable, 60 acres of wood and 100/- rent from Sir William Litelton and Sir John Aston and his wife, Joan.[127]

Graph S3: Pasture acres in the feet of fines, 1196-1508.



[126] PRO: CP25/1/193/2/7.

The first Shropshire fine to mention pasture was in 1236. It was issued in Shrewsbury and involved the transfer of rights of common of pasture in Onslow to Nicholas, the abbot of Buildwas, from Roger de Onslow. The fine states that the abbot and his successors may have common in all the heath of Onslow for all their cattle. Roger would retain the other profits from the heath. The fine also says that Roger should not impound the sheep of the abbot if they strayed onto his lands, unless they were found in the corn or in the meadows. In exchange Roger received 120 sheep from the abbot, along with feed, facilities for their shelter and access to their dung.[128] This one very detailed fine provides an excellent insight into pastoralism in early thirteenth century Shropshire. There is a noticeable rise in pasture mentioned between the 1340s and 1360s with a massive rise in 1368, primarily due to a single fine, whereby Adam de Knyghton obtained 100 acres of arable, five acres of meadow and two acres of pasture in a number of locations throughout the parish of Whitchurch (Lee, Ash Magna, Ash Parva, Broughall and Woodhouse). The fine goes on to mention a total of 2000 acres of wood, 1000 acres of arable and 1000 acres of pasture.[129] Because this fine is unusual in the amount of land mentioned at this time, it has been removed from the following graph to provide a clearer picture of pasture mentioned between 1236 and 1368.

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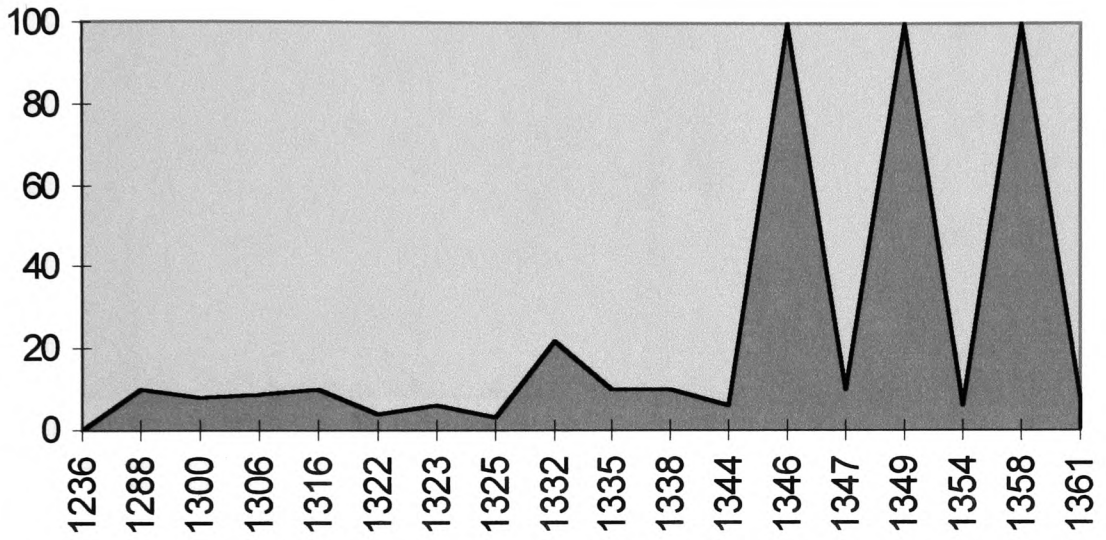
[127] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/18.

[128] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/84.

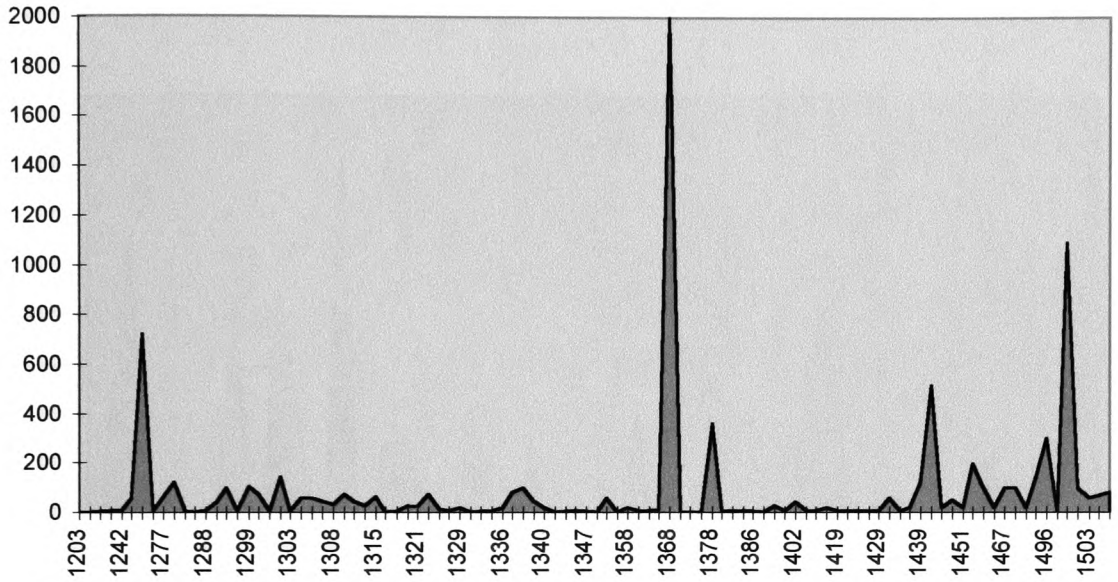
[129] PRO: CP25/1/195/17/29.

Graph S4: Pasture acres in the feet of fines fines, 1236-1368.



The amount of pasture mentioned in fines rises sharply from about 1325. It levels off *c.* 1340 then rises even more dramatically 1344-47, 1347-1354, 1354-1361.

Graph S5: Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1196-1508.



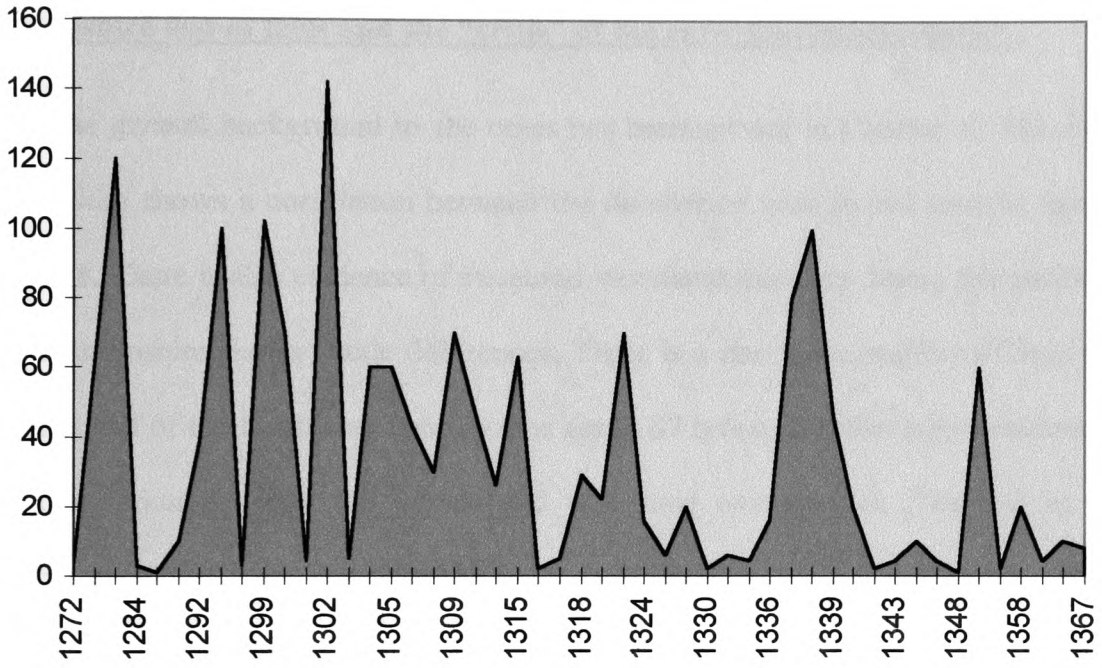
The sharp rise in 1255 was due to one transfer of six carucates of wood in Mocktree to Richard Bacon from Walter de Hopton.[130] There is a significant increase in woodland transfers between 1304 and 1315, a less significant increase between 1318 and 1329 and another rise between 1337 and 1340. The 2000 acres recorded in 1368 was mentioned in one fine for the parish of Whitchurch.[131] There is a small increase in transfers

[130] PRO: CP25/1/193/4/55.

[131] PRO: CP25/1/195/17/29.

in the late fifteenth century. To get a clearer picture of woodland transfers in the early fourteenth century, the following graph has been produced.

Graph S6: Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1277-1367.



The most significant 'block' of woodland conveyances highlighted by this graph is from the period *c.* 1303-1316. There is another, less dramatic grouping for the period 1317-1330 and a rise between 1337 and 1340. There are more dramatic peaks in the graphs of woodland for Shropshire than for Herefordshire. This is due to a few fines with

exceptionally large acreages. Overall, however, woodland transfers appear to have been more constant, in the extent transferred, throughout the period than in Herefordshire. For example, Herefordshire seems to have been more affected, in terms of raised demand for woodland, during the crisis of the early fourteenth century.

5.5 Shropshire feet of fines and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century.

The general background to the crisis has been set out in Chapter 4. The data for Herefordshire shows a correlation between the number of fines issued and the famine of 1315-1318. There is also evidence of increased woodland transfers during this period. The data for Shropshire shows subtle differences. There is a rise in the number of fines issued in the first half of the fourteenth century (see graph S7 below) but this is less evidence of a direct correlation between the famine and woodland conveyances. The rise in arable transfers *c.* 1315-18 seems to suggest that it was more freely available than in Herefordshire at the time, and there was less need for woodland clearances, which were more constant throughout the period in Shropshire. There is more evidence of activity in the land market around 1350 than in Herefordshire. It is possible that the Black Death played more of a role in creating opportunities for people wishing to acquire land.

Despite these differences in the pattern of woodland transfers there is similar evidence for the direct correlation between number of fines issued and the period of the Great Famine. The average number of Shropshire fines issued per year between 1300 and

1350 is nine. The following list shows how the years 1315, 1317 and 1318 had unusually high numbers of transfers, indeed those years represent the first and second highest number of fines issued during the whole half-century.

1311 = 8

1312 = 6

1313 = 11

1314 = 12

1315 = 22

1316 = 8

1317 = 17

1318 = 17

1319 = 6

1320 = 7

1321 = 10

1322 = 6

When this evidence is analysed on a parish level, a correlation is found between the parishes with evidence of land transactions and those singled out as experiencing difficulties in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones.* Owen has noted that Shropshire was one of four areas, identified in the returns submitted by parish jurors, where the abandonment of land was substantial. There are more than 50 townships with records of uncultivated land and the reasons advanced for the vacated holdings include weather, poverty and sheep murrain.[132]

Of the 54 Shropshire parishes identified in fines between 1315 and 1317, thirty-three coincide with troubled districts in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones.*[133] This correlation is apparent when the maps relating to the first half of the fourteenth century (S9, S17, S18, S27, S28, S39, S40) are compared with Baker's map (see chapter 2) which shows the distribution of vills with uncultivated land recorded in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones.*[134] The maps produced from the fine data show that the highest number of transactions occurred in the area southwest of the River Severn, particularly in the Clee-Wenlock district. They also reveal areas with little or no transactions in the extreme northwest and southwest of the county. There is a similar pattern apparent in Baker's map. Furthermore, the parish that experienced the greatest number of transactions, during the period 1315-17, was Burford in the far south of the county, a district noted as experiencing difficulties in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones.*[135]

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[132] Owen, 'Occupation of the Land', *op. cit.*, p. 104.

[133] *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Seaccaria,* ed. G. Vanderzee (Record Commissioners, 1807), pp. 183-194.

[134] A. R. H. Baker, 'Evidence in the 'Nonarum Inquisitiones' of Contracting Arable Lands in England during the Early Fourteenth Century', *Economic History Review,* XIX, (1966), p. 522.

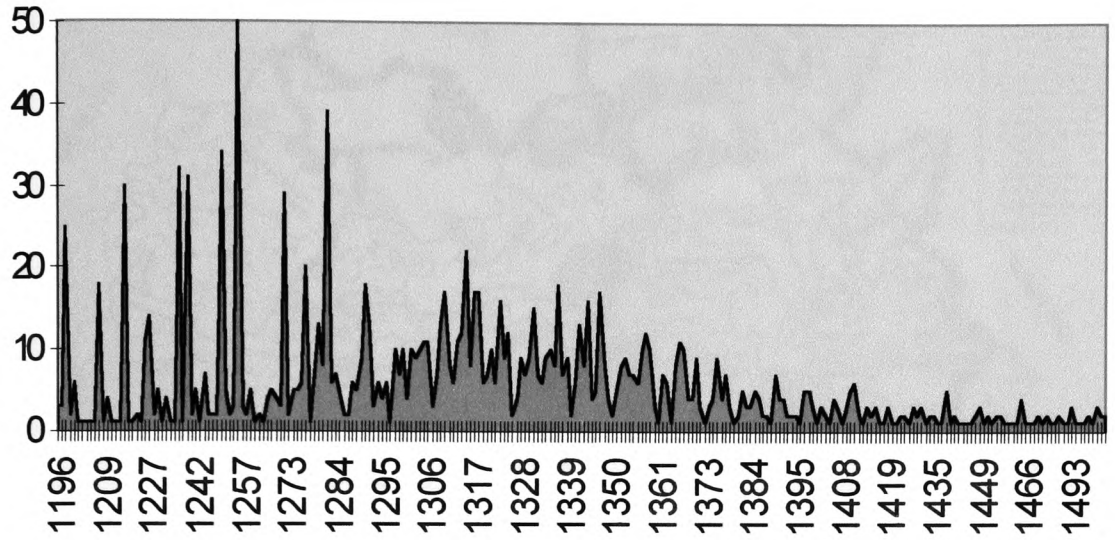
[135] *Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Seaccaria, op. cit.*, p. 187.

There were more fines issued, relating to transfers in Shropshire, during the first half of the fourteenth century, than in any other period in any of the counties under discussion (see tables H8, S3 and G2). The following graph shows a distinct clustering relating to the number of fines issued during the early fourteenth-century. As in Herefordshire this would appear to indicate that a rise in mortality coupled with a need to obtain land to grow corn during the worst years of the famine led to an upsurge in the market for land.

As has been established, Shropshire was less affected, by the crisis of the early fourteenth century than many other counties.[136] It is possible that the great rise in transfers, apparent in Shropshire from the mid thirteenth to the mid fourteenth centuries, represents a rise in new settlement primarily due to population pressures in other parts of England. The discussion in relation to map S8 below suggests a rise in settlement in the more marginal districts of Shropshire during the later thirteenth century. It is possible that this process continued in the early fourteenth century, compounded by the effects of famine in other regions and leading to the very high number of fines issued during this period.

[136] Kettle, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

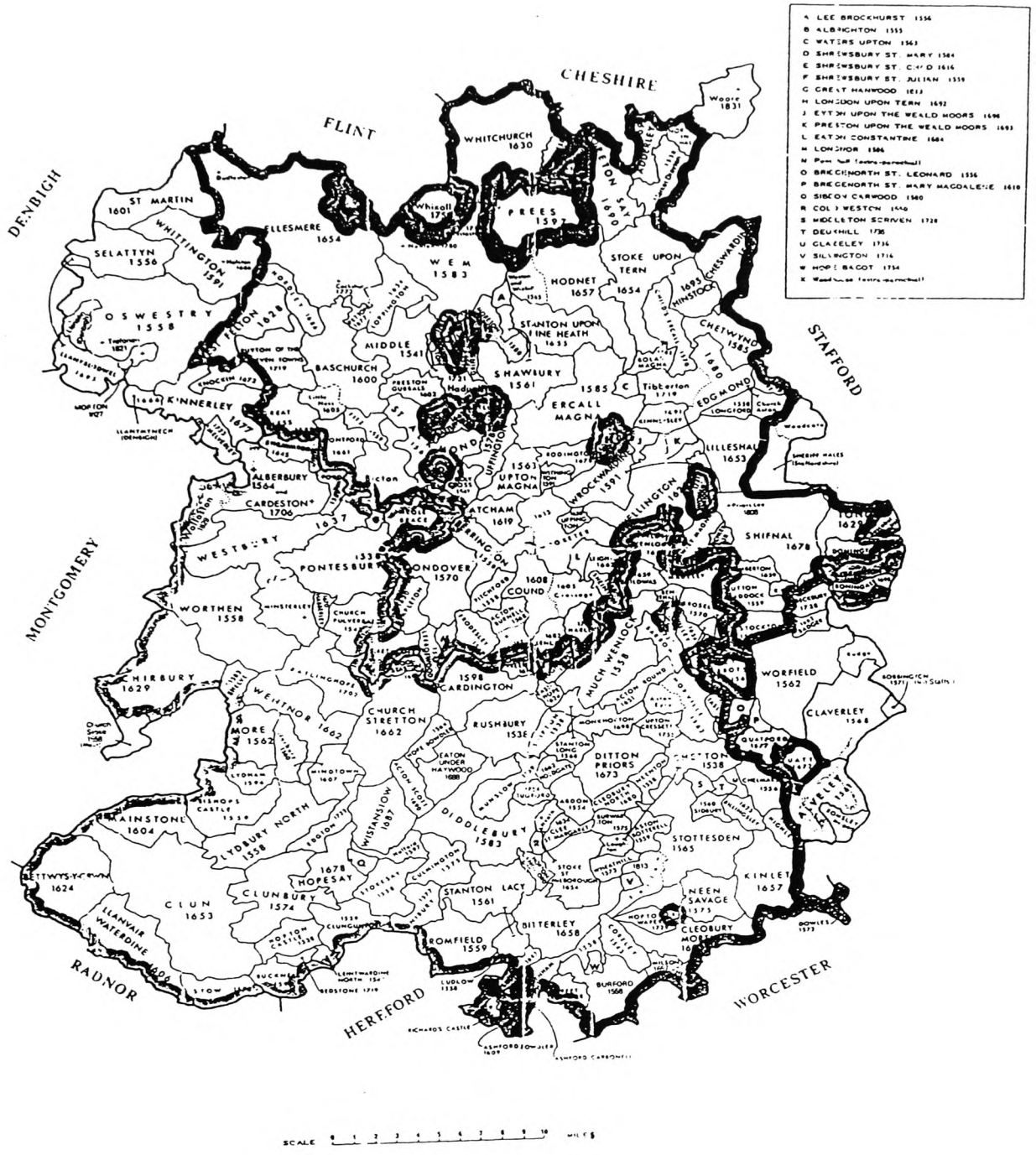
Graph S7: Total numbers of fines issued per year.



5.6 Distribution of land types and settlement in Shropshire, mapping the evidence.

The following maps have been generated from the database of fines and show the distribution and densities of the various land types throughout the various regions of Shropshire. The names of the parishes represented in the maps are shown in map S4. The data has been organized in approximate fifty-year time scales. The maps can be used in conjunction with the above tables and graphs to reveal trends in the historical-geography of the Shropshire landscape. The data will be assessed on both a regional and a sub-regional level to show changes in the relative percentages of various land types and their

S4: Shropshire parishes (after the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies).



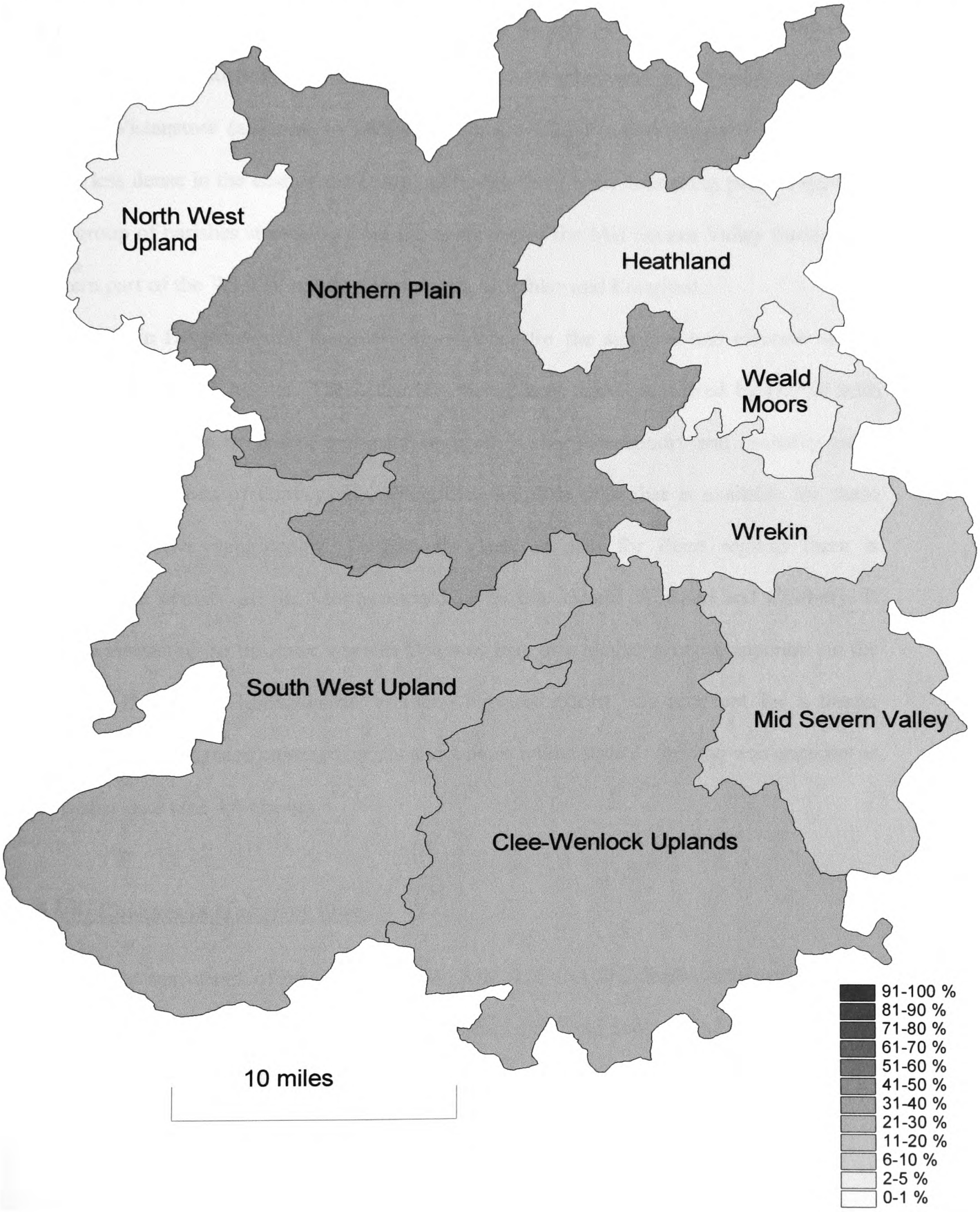
distribution throughout the county.

5.6(i) Distribution and density of land types, 1196-1508.

Map S5 reveals the regional percentages of the total acreages of all types of land recorded in the Shropshire series of fines, 1196-1508. An interesting feature, in comparison to the Herefordshire maps, is that despite having a similar number of regions, Shropshire is dominated by three regions rather than by a single large central region. The Northern Plain has the highest percentage (31.5%) followed by the Clee-Wenlock Uplands at 26.5% and the South West Upland at 22.5%. Of the smaller regions, it is interesting that the Mid Severn Valley, which is adjacent to the Clee-Wenlock Uplands has a much more significant percentage (10%) than the regions around the Northern Plain such as the Wrekin (3.5%), the Weald Moors (2.5%), the Heathlands (3%) and the North West Upland (0.5%). Map S6 reveals the distribution of transfers of all types of land in the fines, and helps explain the figures revealed by map S5 on a sub-regional level. The map reveals that fines were being used in all the regions of Shropshire to transfer land. There are a few parishes with no data but overall the dataset is spatially wide ranging.

In general most of the activity appears to be taking place south of the River Severn. The reason for the high percentage on the Northern Plain, as revealed by map S5, is primarily due to a group of parishes in the extreme north of the region, around Whitchurch and Adderley on the Cheshire border. In the centre and south of the region, distribution is much less dense, with the exception of the district around Shrewsbury. The

S5: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-150



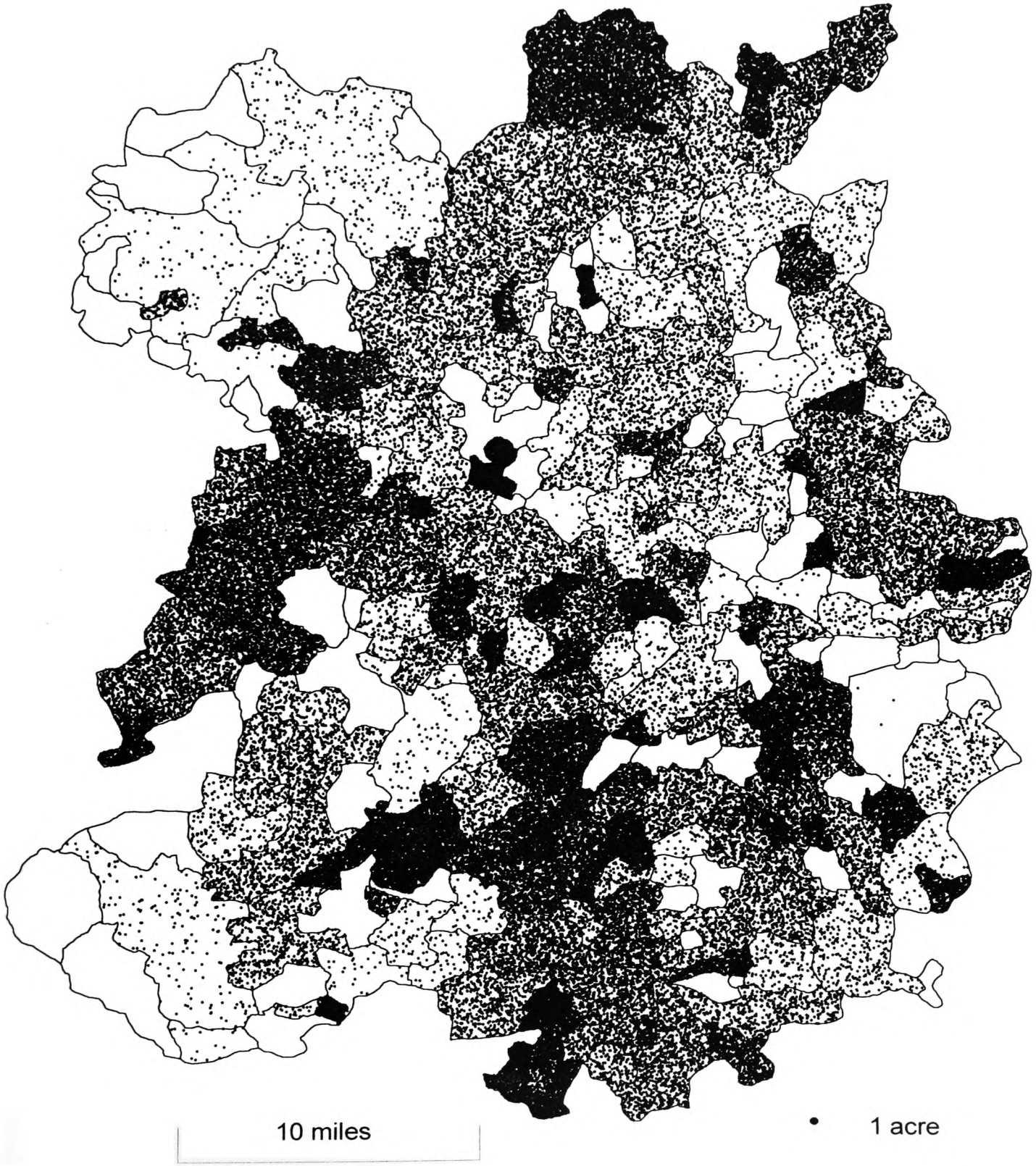
Clee-Wenlock region has the most widespread coverage, with particularly high densities apparent around Diddlebury and Ludford. Most of the evidence for the South West Upland is in the northwest of the region around Worthen and in a group of parishes around Wistanstow (adjacent to Diddlebury in the Clee-Wenlock Region). Coverage is much less dense in the east of the county although there is an interesting pattern apparent in a group of parishes stretching from the northeast of the Mid Severn Valley through the eastern part of the Wrekin, notably, Donington, Stirchley and Longford.

As in Herefordshire, there is little evidence for the marginal and extreme upland areas on the Welsh border. These districts were likely to be populated by people with close cultural links to Wales, primarily engaged in sheep husbandry and probably using traditional methods of conveyance. Therefore, the little data that is available for these areas can prove enlightening. Despite the lack of data for these regions there is considerable activity on the Montgomeryshire border around Worthen and Chirbury. It will be interesting to discover whether this was part of a similar process apparent on the Western Border in Herefordshire, whereby new settlement was apparent for a longer period than in the more central districts and a more mixed style of farming was apparent at an earlier date (see 4.6 above).

5.6(ii) Changes in land over time.

The next series of maps, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11 and S12 display information for an analysis of the changes apparent in the percentages of total acreages of all types of land

S6: Distribution of acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1508.



over time.

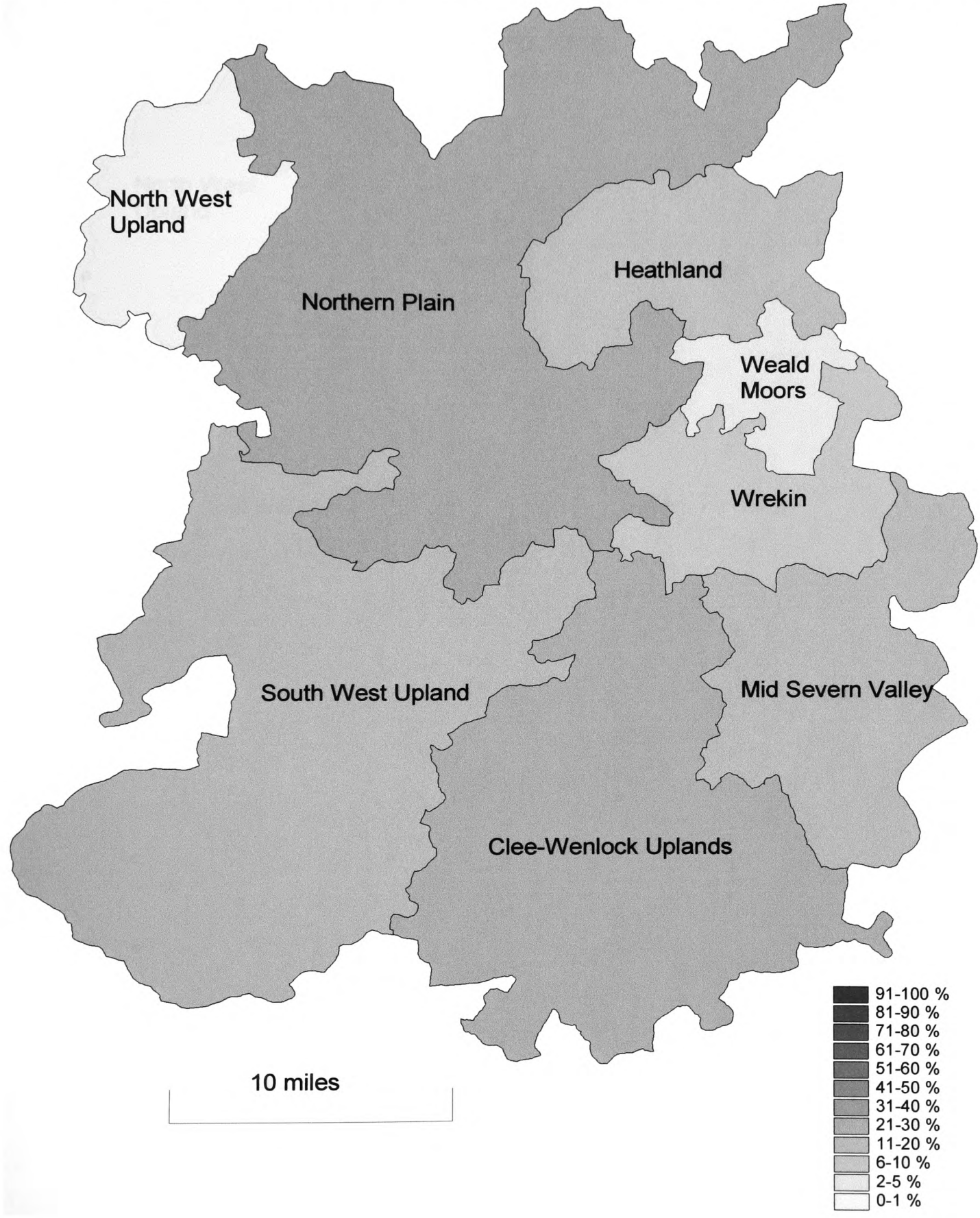
Map S7: 1196-1248.

Of the three largest regions, the Northern Plain and the Clee-Wenlock Uplands (two very different regions in terms of relief - see maps S2 and S3 above) have similar percentages at 25% and 22.5% respectively. However, in contrast to the overall situation displayed in map S5, the South West Upland has a much lower figure at 14%. The regions in the east of the county have notably higher percentages than for the complete period, most notably the Heathland, which has a similar figure to the Mid Severn Valley (13%). The comparatively high percentages in the east and the relatively low figure for the South West Upland appears to suggest that settlement and activity was concentrated in the central and eastern districts of the county and was less evident closer to the Welsh border. This was characteristic of Herefordshire during this period (see map H8 in section 4.6 above).

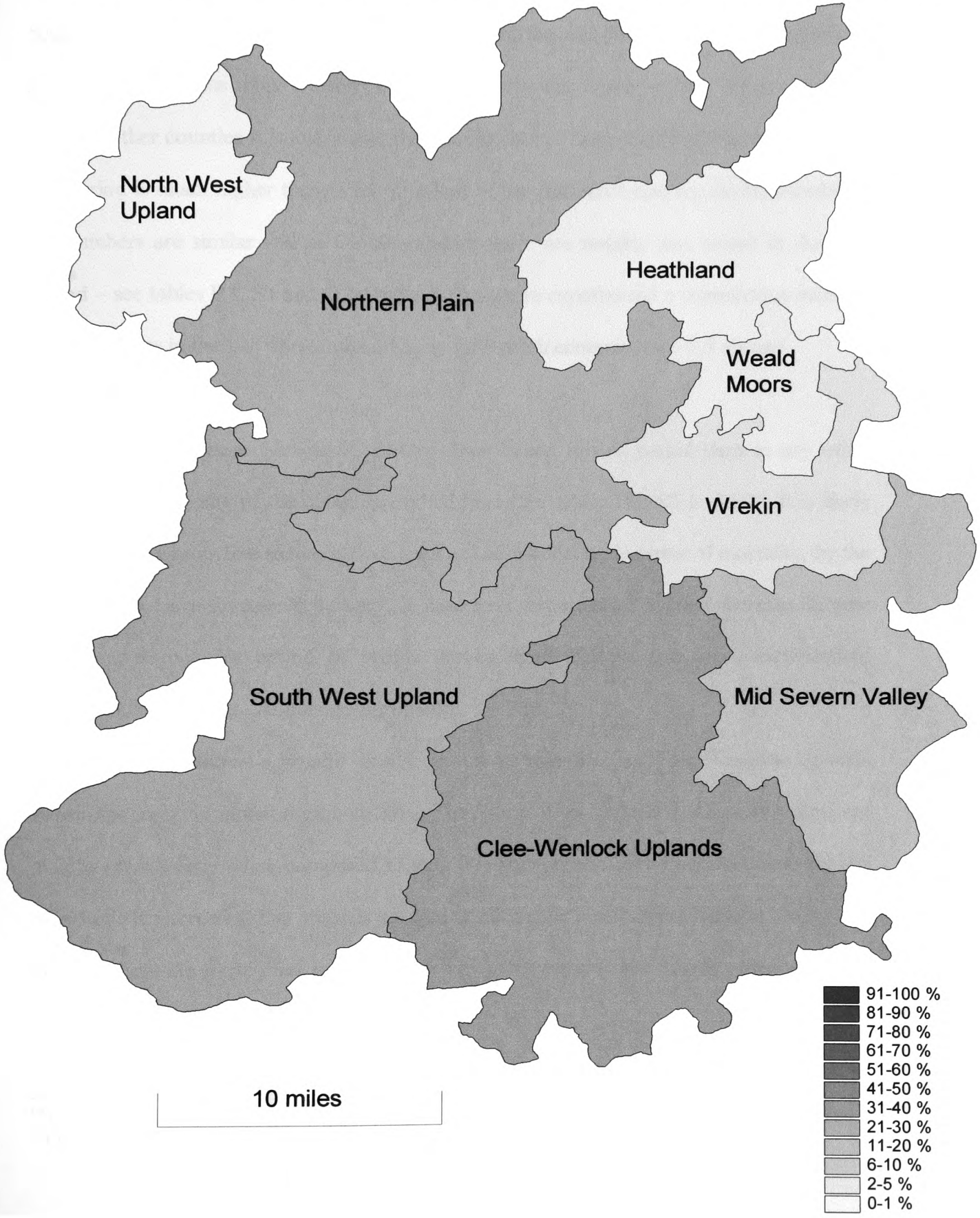
Map S8: 1249-1300.

Compared with the previous period this map reveals a distinct move in activity westwards and, more especially, towards the southwest. The Clee-Wenlock region is now the dominant district in terms of the amount of land transferred with 33%. There has been a very significant rise in the South West Upland (23.5%), which now has a greater percentage than the Northern Plain, which has fallen to 20%. There has been a notable fall in the northeastern regions although the Mid Severn Valley has remained stable at 13%. The thirteenth century was one of sustained population growth in England, which was to

S7: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.



S8: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.



reach a peak in the early fourteenth century.[137] It is possible that this population growth began to affect some of the regions of Shropshire by the mid thirteenth century, leading to new settlement in the more westerly districts, close to the Welsh border. When compared with the other counties it is interesting that the number of fines issued in Shropshire during this period is much higher than in the first half of the thirteenth century (in Herefordshire the numbers are similar and in Gloucestershire there are notably less issued in the later period – see tables H8, S3 and G2). Indeed, Shopshire experienced a tremendous increase in transactions in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries (see 5.5 above).

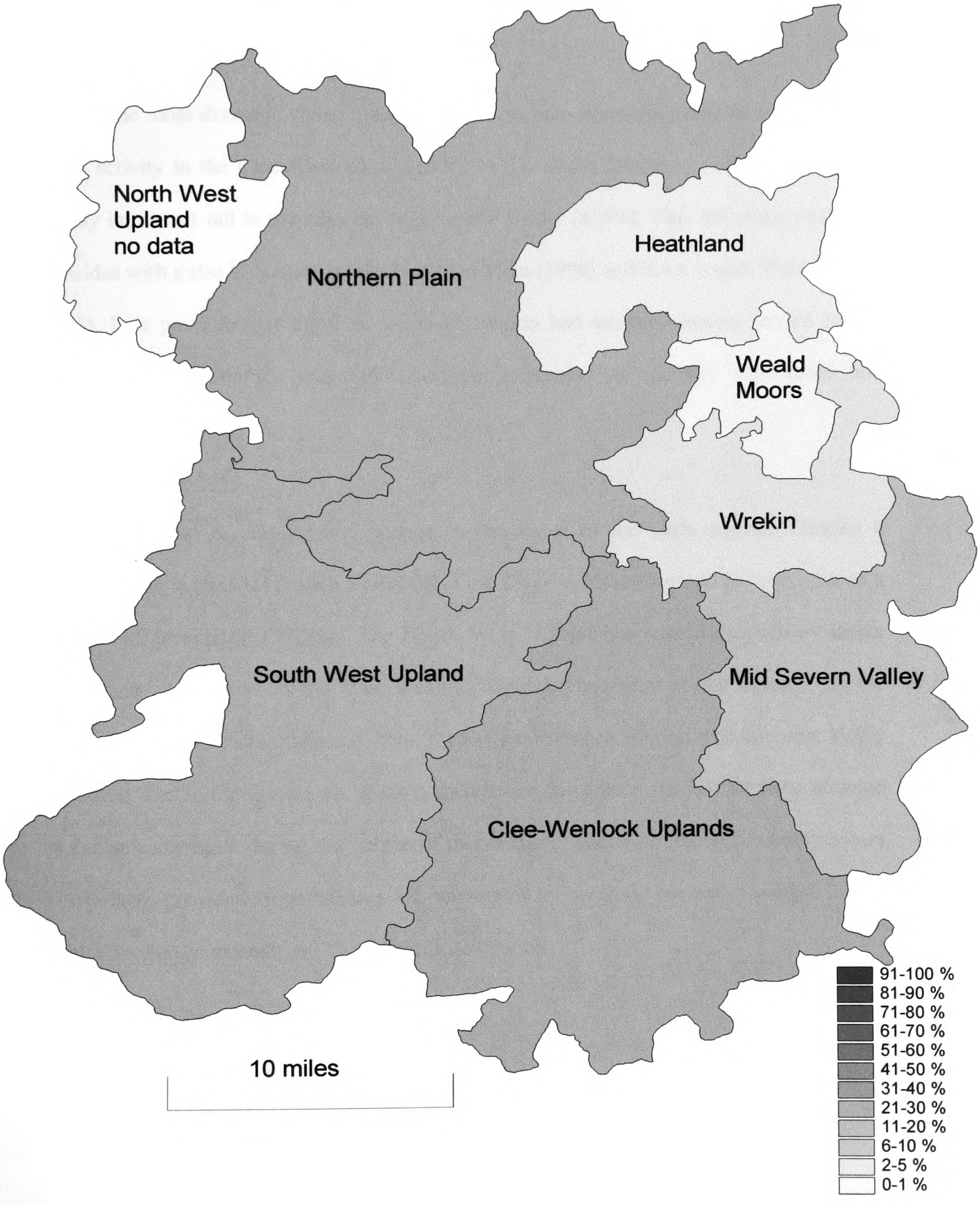
Map S9: 1301-1352.

There are more Shropshire feet of fines issued in this period than in any other period relating to any of the counties studied here (see tables H8, S3 and G2). It is likely that although Shropshire may not have been as badly affected, in terms of mortality, by the crisis of the early fourteenth century, it may have experienced a great increase in new settlement during this period as people moved from districts that were experiencing difficulties, both inside and outside Shropshire.

This map shows a broadly similar picture to map S8. The Clee-Wenlock Uplands remain the most dominant region at 29%. The South West Upland is still very significant at 23% (particularly when compared to map S7) but the Northern Plain has risen slightly to 26%. It is interesting that there is no data at all for the North West Upland, despite the fact that there are more fines issued than in any other period. The position on the eastern

[137] C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later Middle Ages: Social change in England c. 1200-1520,* (Revised edition, Cambridge, 1998), pp. 287-88.

S9: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.



border has remained very stable, particularly in the Mid Severn Valley (a constant 13% since the earliest period).

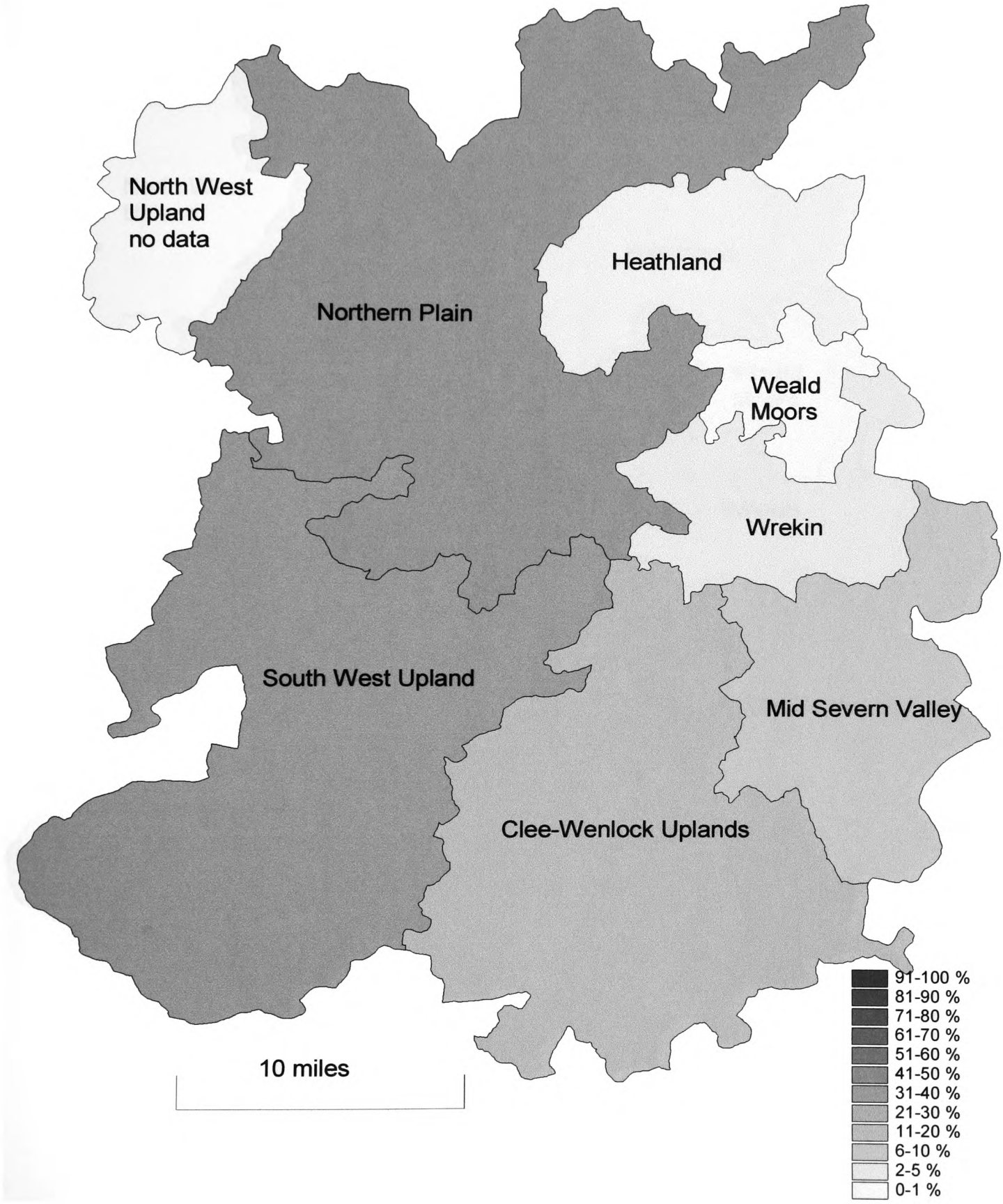
Map S10: 1353-1404.

The most dramatic change, apparent on this map from the previous period, is the fall in activity in the Clee-Wenlock Uplands (18%), which appears to be linked with an equally important fall in the adjacent Mid Severn Valley (6.5%). This fall in the southeast coincides with a rise in activity on the Northern Plain (39%) and in the South West Upland (33%). It is possible that the Clee-Wenlock Region had become densely settled by the early fourteenth century and there was an expansion of activity westwards and northwards.

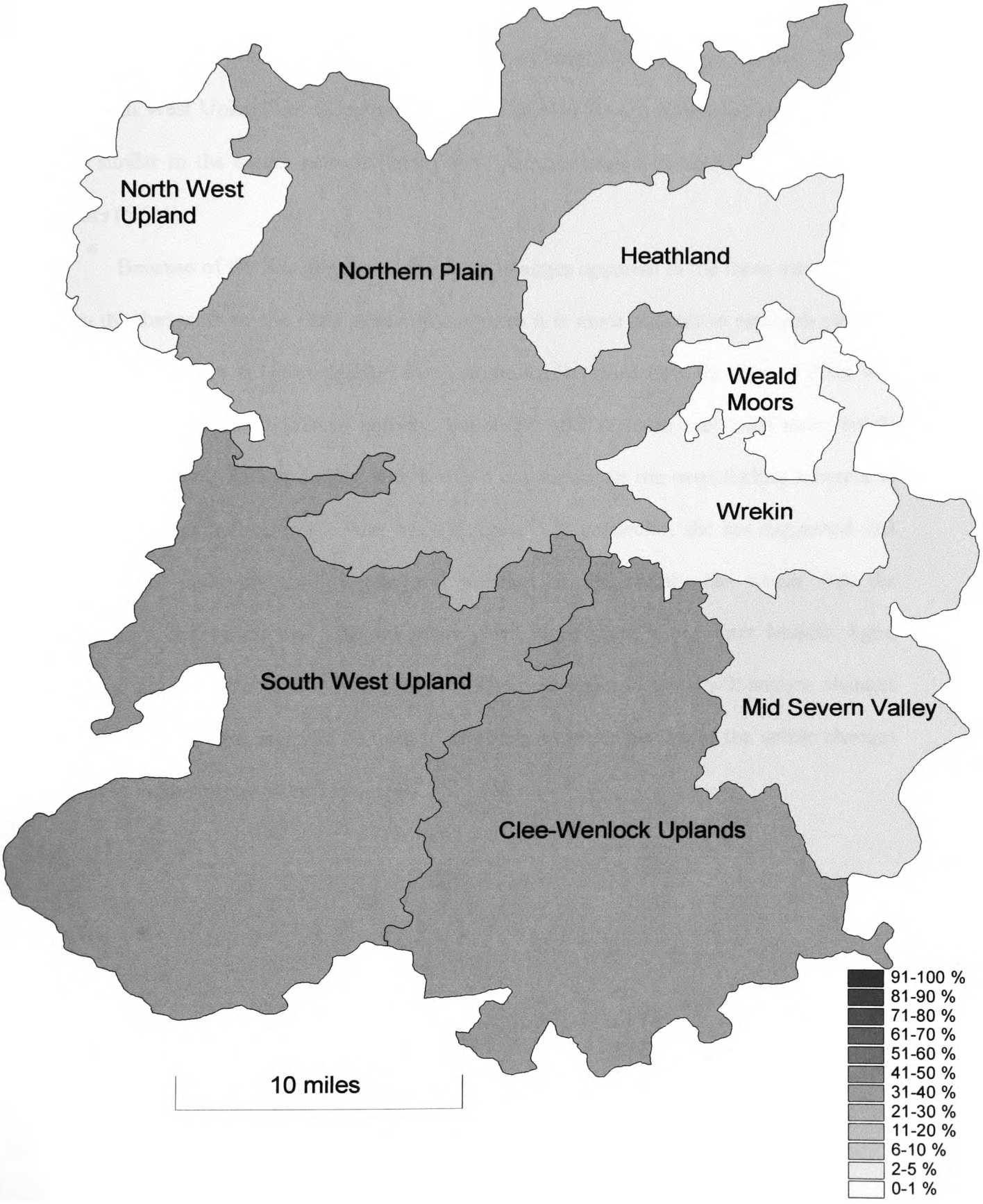
Map S11: 1405-1456.

This map reveals another change in the status of the main regions. Despite a continued fall in the Mid Severn Valley (4%) the Clee-Wenlock Region has risen back to a position of dominance (37.5%). The South West Upland has remained relatively stable (31%) and so the rise in the Clee-Wenlock Uplands has been at the expense of the Northern Plain which has fallen to 22%. If the Clee-Wenlock Region was the most highly populated area in the fourteenth century, then it may have been the district most affected by famine and plague during the course of that century. Therefore, in the fifteenth century it may have provided opportunities for settlement as holdings became available in this district due to the mortality of the previous generation.

S10: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



S11: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



S12: 1457-1508.

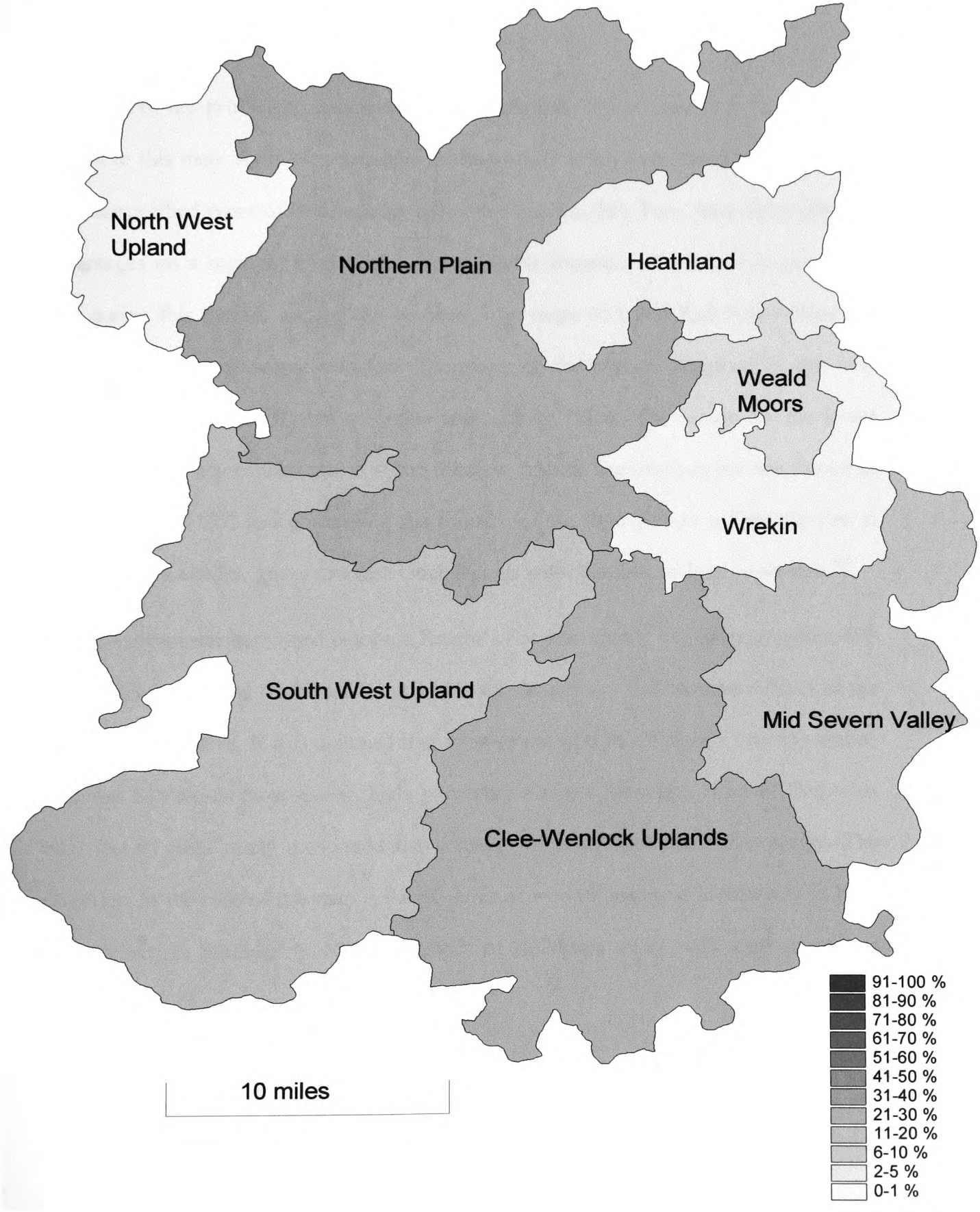
There are further changes among the primary regions apparent here. The Northern Plain and the Clee Wenlock Uplands now have very similar percentages, around 29%, but the South West Upland has fallen to just 18%. The Mid Severn Valley has risen back to a level similar to the earlier periods (14%) and there has been a notable rise on the Weald Moors (5.5%)

Because of the intriguing, and frequent, changes apparent in the three main regions from the thirteenth to the early sixteenth centuries it is more difficult to establish patterns in the same way as in Herefordshire, for example. In Herefordshire, the Central Plain was always the dominant region of activity, but in Shropshire there are much more subtle changes apparent, corresponding with Kettle's comments on the complexities inherent in Shropshire's agriculture in the later Middle Ages.[138] In particular, she has suggested that the physical make-up and geographical position of the county has meant that the agricultural depression that affected many parts of England in the later Middle Ages, followed a different course in Shropshire.[139] The next series of maps will analyse changes in land use over time and will be used to establish a clearer picture of the subtle changes apparent in Shropshire from 1196-1508.

[138] Kettle, '1300-1540', *The Victoria County History of Shropshire*, Vol. IV, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-119.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

S12: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.



5.6(iii) Changes in arable over time

Map S13: Regional percentages, 1196-1248.

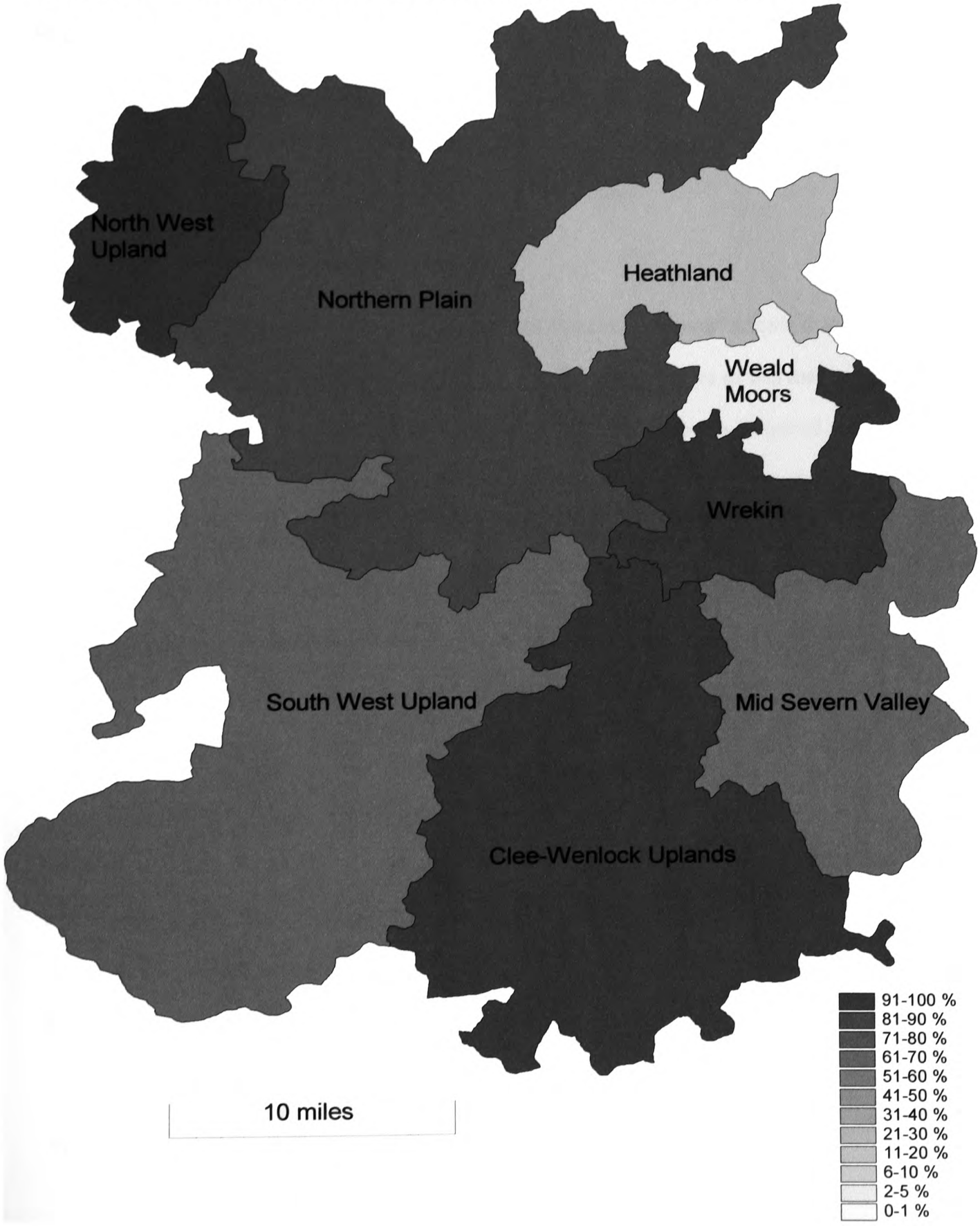
There are problems, associated with the dataset, which need to be explained in relation to this map. As in Herefordshire in this period, a few fines involving transfers of large, unspecified types of land, usually in the form of Knight's Fees, have influenced the percentages on a regional level. There are negligible transfers of meadow or pasture in fines during this period, and as can be seen from maps S35 and S36 below there are limited records of woodland transfers. Therefore, all the regions described by this map should have percentage figures of arable approaching 100%. The reason for the lower percentages in many of the regions is due to a few unusual fines such as the one, issued in Shrewsbury in 1197, and concerning the transfer of the third part of a Knight's Fee in Knockin, from Griffin, son of Gervase Goch and his wife, Matilda, to John Lestrange.[140]

As has been mentioned before, a Knight's Fee was usually five hides, or about 600 acres.[141] The recording of this land unit within the dataset can lead to abnormalities of the type described above. If it is assumed that most of the land in a Knight's Fee was arable, then map S13 would have similar, high, percentages across the range. It seems likely that early feet of fines rarely mentioned the acreages of land types other than arable. The exception, in the case of this map is the 60 acres of wood transferred in Stirchley in 1246 from Osbert de Stirchley to Nicholas, abbot of Buildwas, along with four virgates of

[140] PRO: CP25/1/193/1/4.

[141] C. R. Chapman, *How heavy, how much and how long: weights, money and other measures used by our ancestors*, (Dursley, 1995), pp. 26-27.

S13: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.



arable, two mills, a messuage, a garden and two small plots.[142] This fine is very interesting because it records a list of meadows; the Great Meadow, Crumbwelle Meadow, Nordwelle Meadow, a meadow by Yardcrofte, Platte Meadow, Clokerwell Meadow and Milnefeld Meadow. Therefore, it is obvious that meadow was an important commodity but that the acreage is rarely recorded in fines during this period.

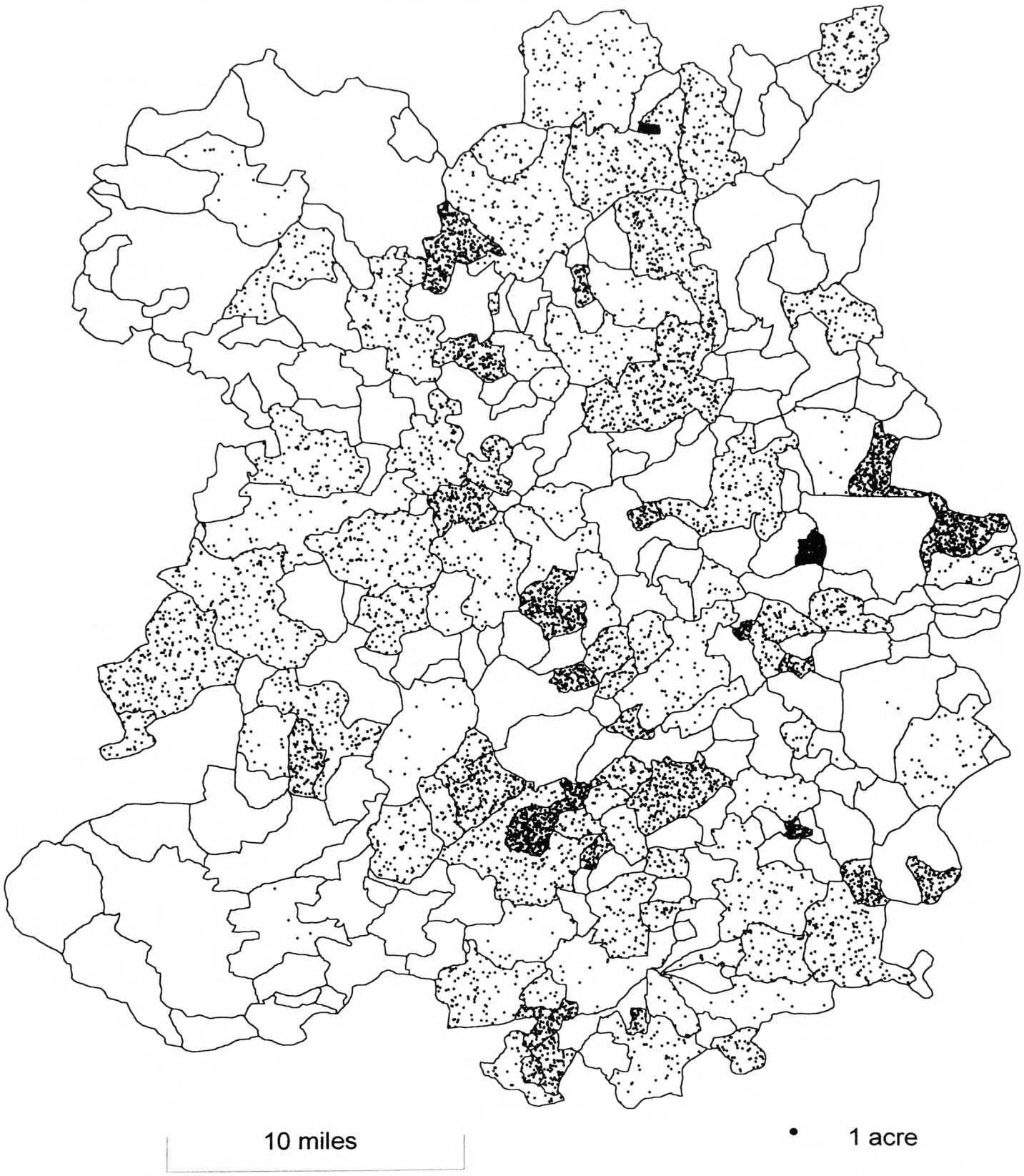
Map S14: Distribution, 1196-1248.

Due to the difficulties in the interpretation of the previous map described above, map S14 is, perhaps, more useful for this period. The interesting feature of this map is the activity in the parishes of the Clee-Wenlock region. Distribution is more widespread in this region than in any other. This is particularly significant when it is realised that the region was not subject to any of the unusual transfers mentioned in relation to map S13 (the region achieves 98% coverage in map S13). In other words, the Clee-Wenlock Upland appears to be the most significant arable district at this time. The parishes with the highest densities in this region are those around Ludlow, Wistanstow, Munslow, Abdon and Morville.

The Northern Plain has a reasonable coverage of transactions, particularly in the northeast around Prees and in the south around Shrewsbury. Overall, distribution is sparse in the South West Upland although there is an important district apparent around Worthen on the Montgomeryshire border. Evidence is very patchy in the east of the county with the exception of a few parishes near Tong on the Staffordshire border.

[142] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/159.

S14: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.



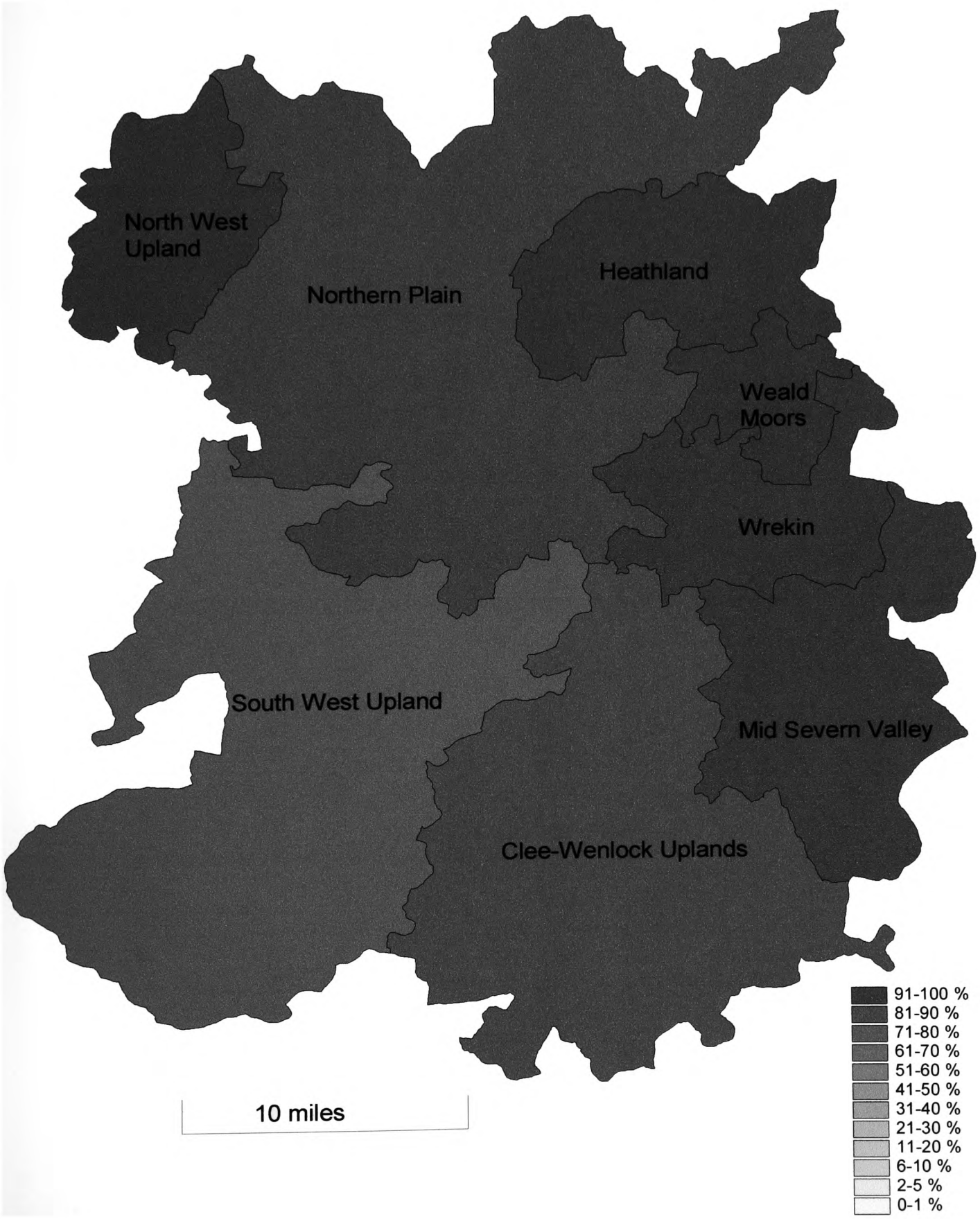
Map S15: Regional percentages, 1249-1300.

This map is much more enlightening than map S13. Arable is shown to be the dominant land type transferred in all the regions. The slightly lower percentages recorded in the Clee-Wenlock Uplands (84%) and on the Northern Plain (89%) are partially due to some abnormal transfers of the type mentioned before, but there are records of transfers of other types of land associated with these regions (see maps S25, S26, S37 and S38). The most important aspect of this map is the relatively low percentage recorded for the South West Upland (71%). This is due to the rise in transfers of other land types, most notably wood, which at 27.5% of the total land conveyed in this region in the second half of the thirteenth century, represents a very important trend. This seems indicative of a period of new settlement in the southwest of the county, a situation which was suggested in relation to map S8 above.

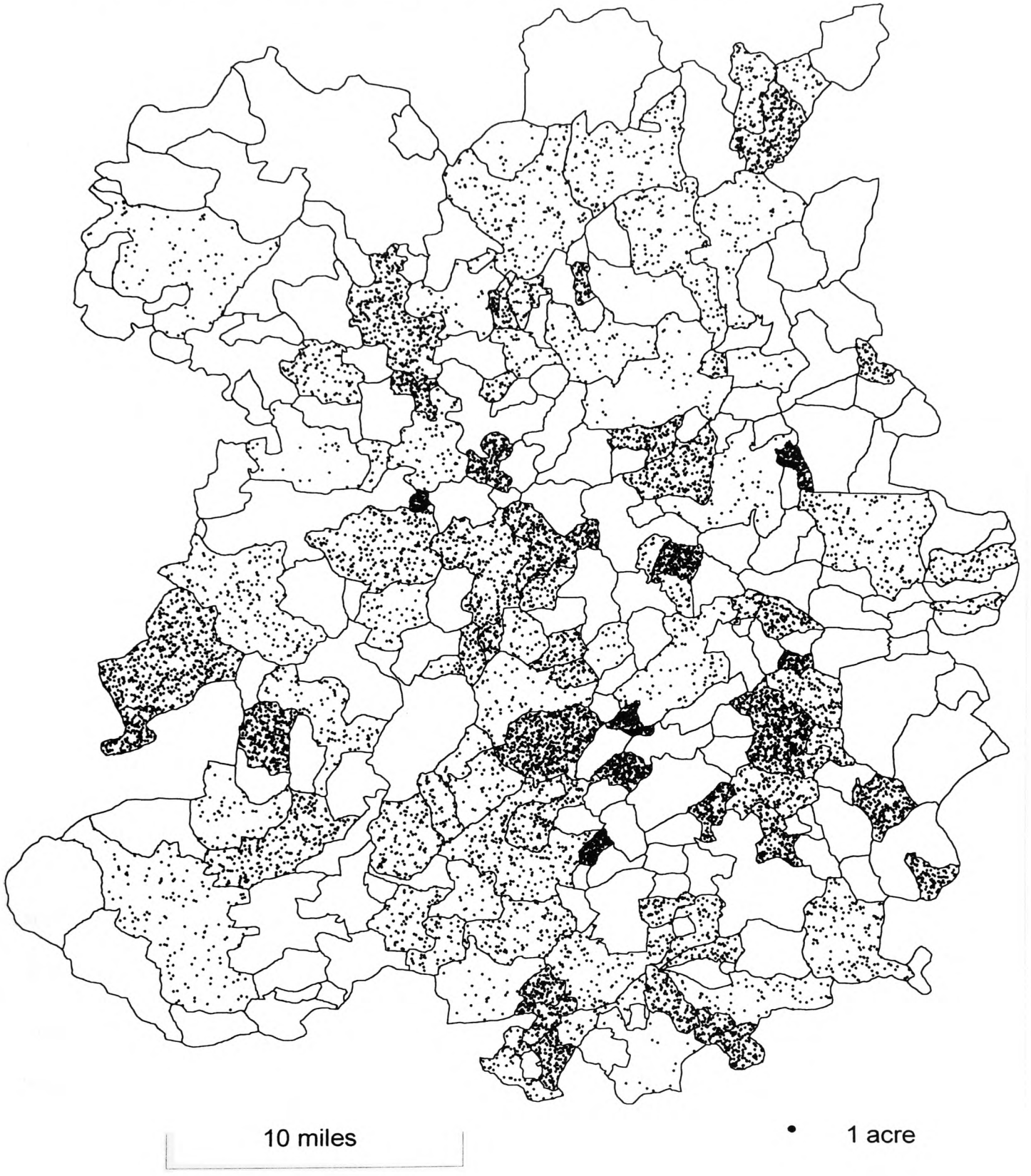
Map S16: Distribution, 1249-1300.

This map helps confirm the move westwards and southwestwards with a wider distribution in the South West Uplands than apparent in the previous period, notably around Clun in the extreme southwest. There has also been a move in activity from the Clee-Wenlock Uplands into the South West Uplands, around Acton Scott. Distribution and density is still very low in the northwest. A significant area of activity is apparent around Morville on the edge of the Mid Severn Valley. There appears to have been a slight fall in the extent of records on the Northern Plain, particularly in the extreme north.

S15: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.



S16: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.

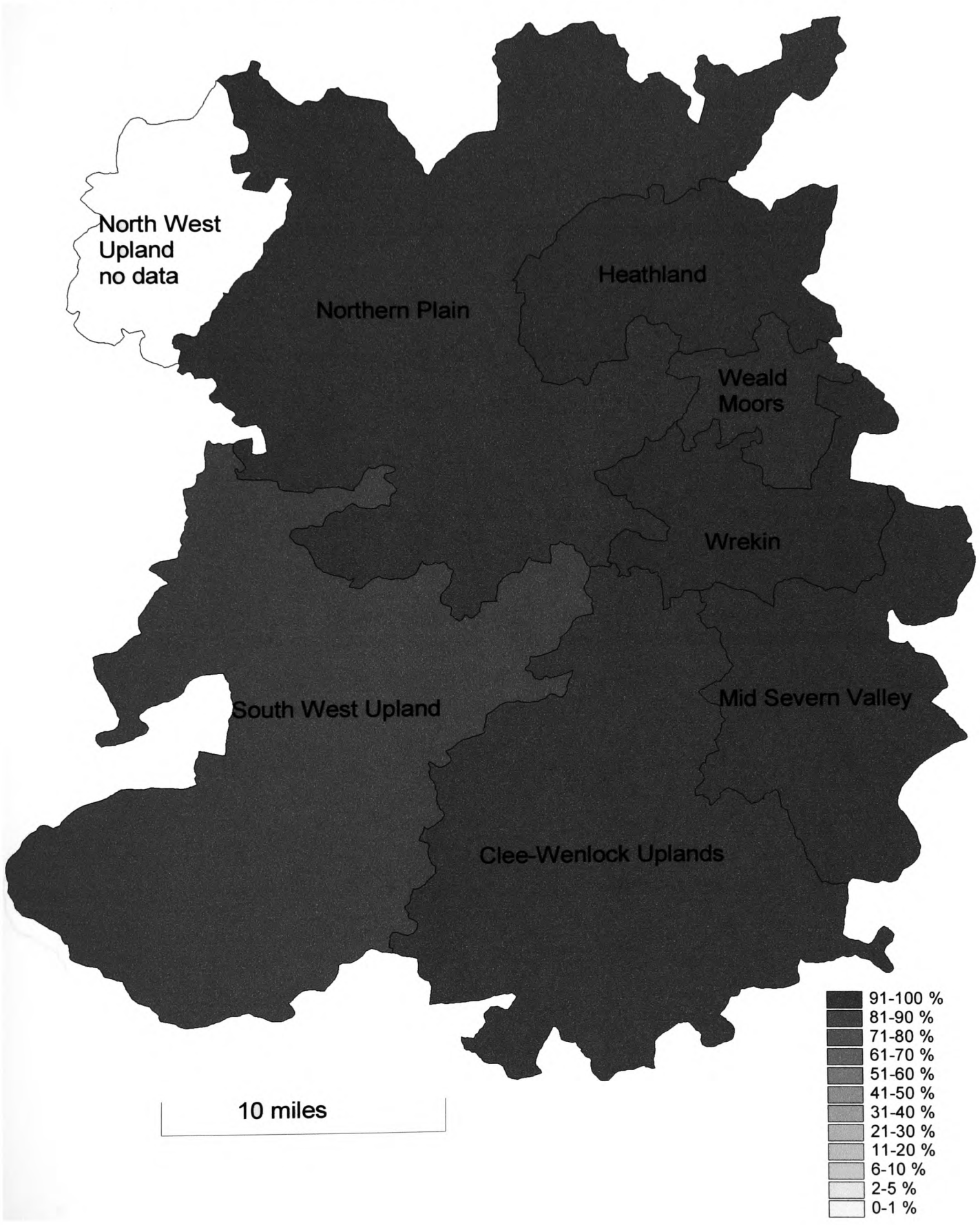


Map S17: Regional percentages, 1301-1352.

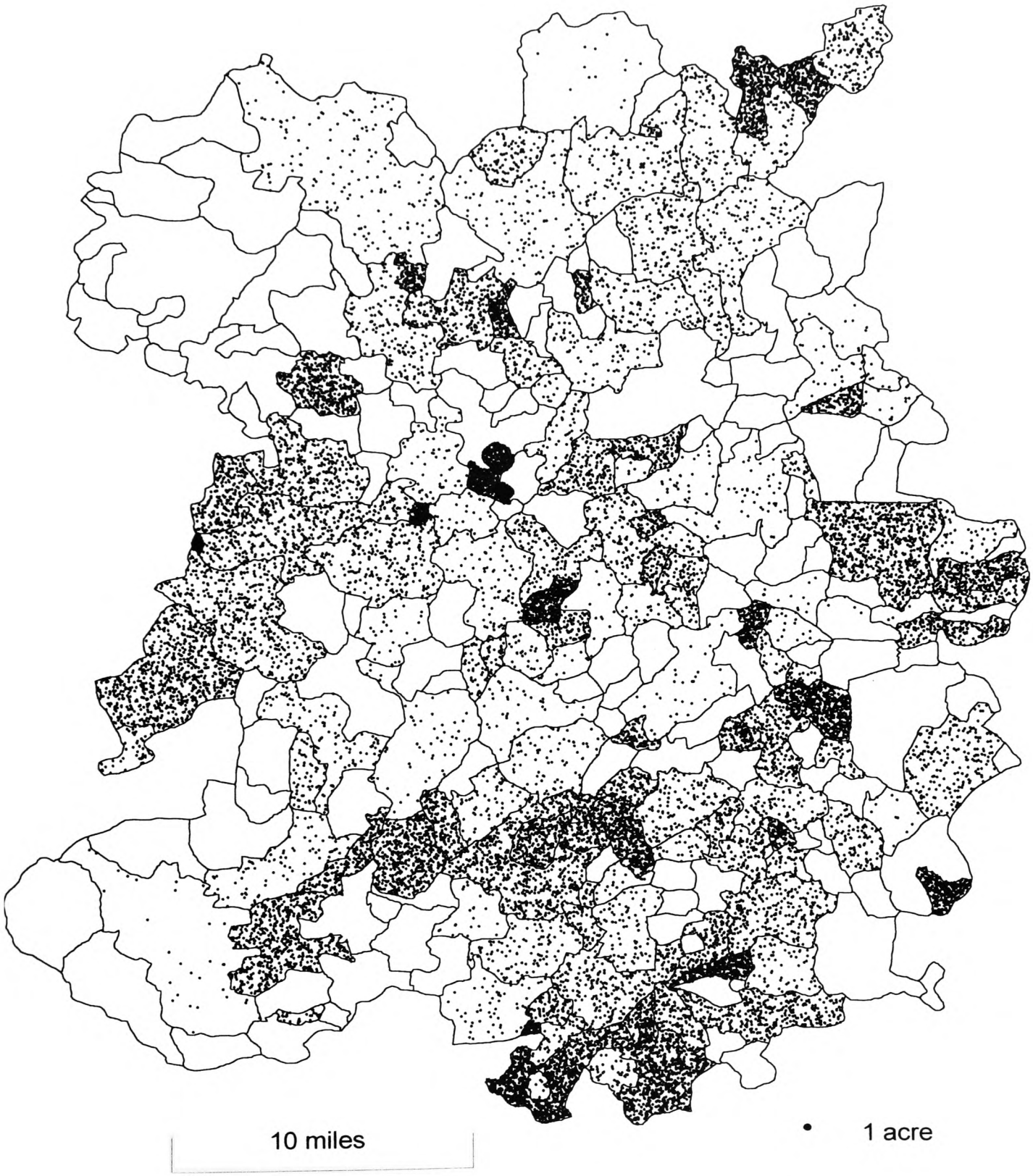
This map is representative of the best dataset (in terms of number of fines issued in Shropshire) of all the periods under discussion. With the exception of the North West Upland, which has no data, all the regions have percentages of arable of between 90 and 99% of the total. The South West Upland, once again, has the lowest percentage (90%) followed closely by the Clee-Wenlock Uplands (91%) then the Northern Plain and the Weald Moors at 92% each. Despite the similarities in percentages between the three primary regions, when the data is analysed more closely, significant differences become apparent. All the three regions have records of transfers of land types other than arable. In the case of the South West Upland, the main most prominent is wood. In the Clee-Wenlock Uplands it is meadow and pasture whereas on the Northern Plain there is more of a balance with wood just a little more significant than meadow and pasture (see maps S27 and S39).

These differences may suggest that new settlement was continuing in the southwest of the county as it had done in the previous period. In comparison, the lack of records of woodland transfers in the Clee-Wenlock region may indicate that there was less woodland available, or required, for clearance and it is possible that the farmers of the arable districts of this region were beginning to experiment with more mixed farming methods. On the Northern Plain, the relatively high percentage of woodland transfers suggests that some districts of this region were being cleared for arable production, possibly in the face of problems associated with the poor harvests and famines in the first

S17: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.



S18: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.



decades of the fourteenth century.

There is less evidence of transfers of other land types in the more minor districts, the exception being the Weald Moors, which has fairly significant records of meadow, pasture and wood, and, to a lesser extent, the Mid Severn Valley, which has the characteristics of an important arable sub-region.

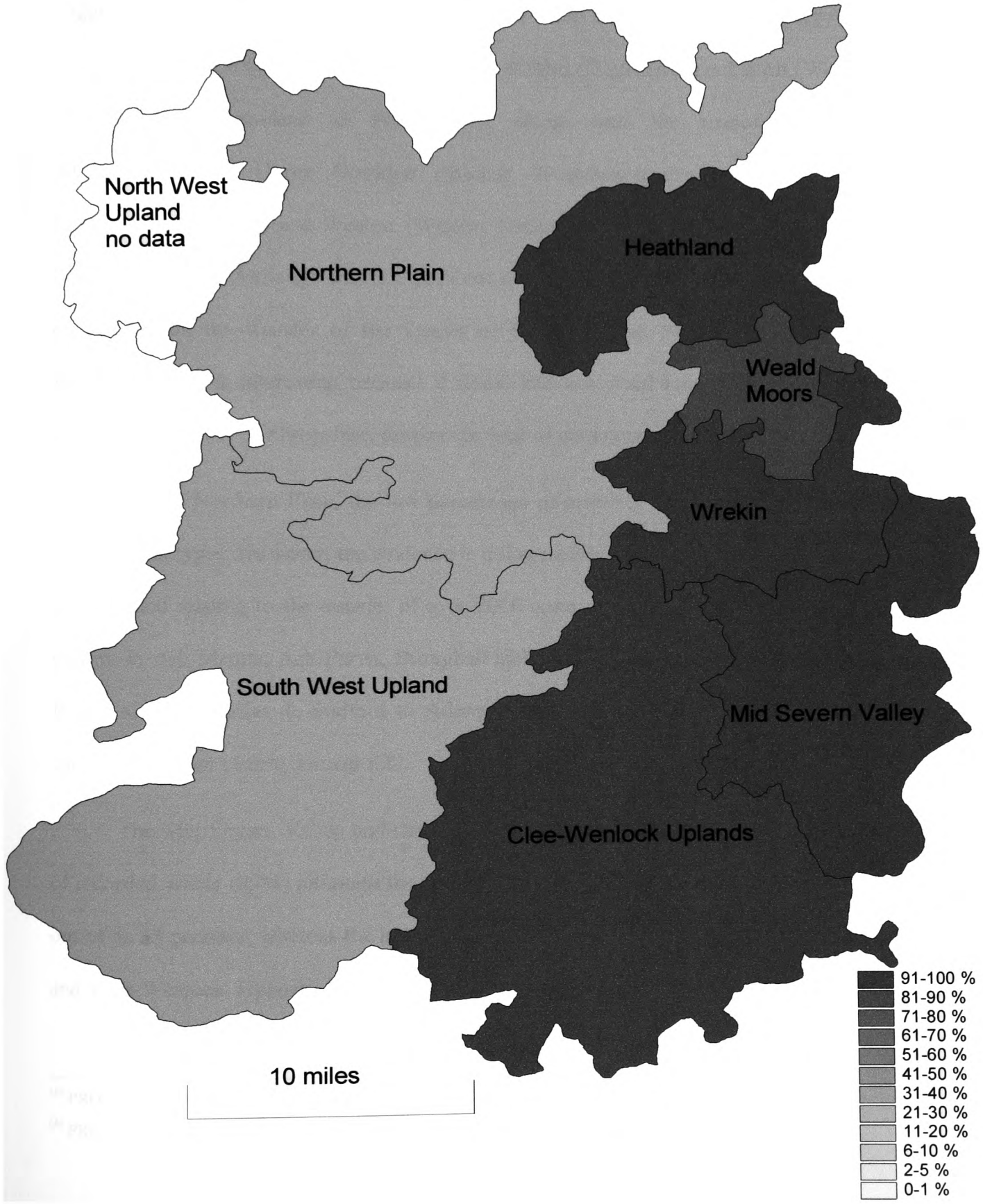
Map S18: Distribution, 1301-1352.

Distribution has increased noticeably in all the regions, with the exception of the North West Uplands. There are important clusters of arable transfers in the Clee-Wenlock Uplands and in the parishes of the South West Uplands, which border Montgomeryshire. There are reasonable distributions in the north of the Northern Plain and on the Staffordshire border around Albrighton. Overall, the Clee-Wenlock region has the most extensive coverage, with most of its parishes having evidence of activity. This indicates that this region continued to be the most significant in terms of agricultural activity during this critical period. This may help explain the importance of woodland transfers in the southwest and on the Northern Plain at this time, which may represent an attempt to relieve the pressure on the population and arable land in the Clee-Wenlock area.

Map S19: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

This map appears to show a major change with a fall in transfers implied on the Northern Plain and the South West Upland which both have 37% of arable. However, closer analysis of the data reveals that both regions are affected by some

S19: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



abnormal documents. In the South West Upland in 1357, Ralph, the Earl of Stafford, in conjunction with his son, Hugh, obtained four and a half Knight's Fees spread throughout Westbury, Leigh (Worthen), Hope (Worthen), Walton (Worthen), Yockleton (Westbury) and Horton (Hortonlane in Pontesbury), along with the manors of Forden (Montgomeryshire), Upper Gorddwr (Wales), Woodluston (Pen-y-Lan in Forden), Hopton (Churchstoke) and Weston (Weston Madoc in Churchstoke) from the Knight, Brian de Corvil.[143] Although this fine does not mention any specific land types it does go on to mention the transfer of the forests of Habberley and Shelve (in the parish of Worthen). This is interesting because it shows the continued importance of woodland transfers in this part of Shropshire, despite the lack of data concerning specific acreages.

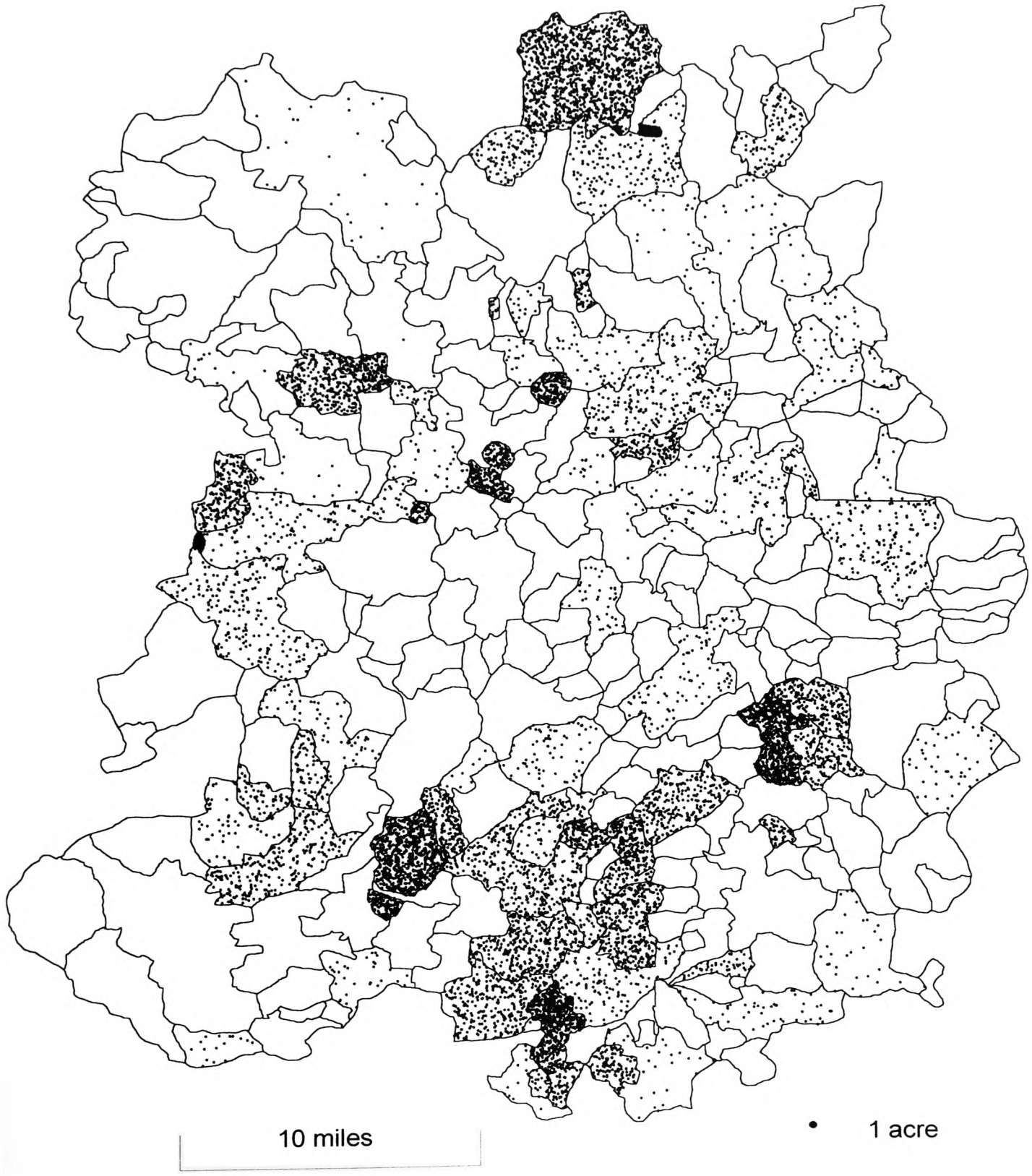
On the Northern Plain, the low percentage of arable is due to the rise in transfers of other land types. However, the evidence is influenced by one very interesting fine issued in 1368, and relating to the transfer of over 2000 acres of wood and a thousand acres of pasture in Ash Magna, Ash Parva, Broughall and Woodhouse (all in Whitchurch), from Ralph, son of Nicholas de Sudford to Adam de Knighton.[144] The results of this transfer can be seen, more clearly, in map S20.

The Mid Severn Valley and the Heathlands have the most significant percentages of recorded arable (99%) although the former of these two regions has records in just six out of its 33 parishes, whereas the latter has records in six out of 13 parishes. The Wrekin and Clee-Wenlock Uplands have similar percentages, 94% and 93% respectively. The

[143] PRO: CP25/1/195/16/5.

[144] PRO: CP25/1/195/17/29.

S20: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



Weald Moors, at 87% is indicative of a rise in transfers of meadow and pasture, notably in the adjacent parishes of Newport and Chetwynd on the Staffordshire border.

Map S20: Distribution, 1353-1404.

There is a dramatic fall in the extent and amount of arable transferred in fines in this period. The area between the Rivers Onny and Corve remains a significant district but there are extensive falls everywhere else. There are some important clusters, such as the parishes around Whitchurch in the north, Morville in the east and Wollaston in the west.

The most important regions, in terms of activity in this period, can be established by considering the number of parishes with records of transfers of arable in each region. For example, the Heathland has the most significant percentage of parishes with such data - six out of 13 giving a figure of 46%. The next most significant region is the Northern Plain (43%), then the Clee-Wenlock Uplands and the South West Upland with 38%. The Weald Moors, and the Wrekin both have 33% and the Mid Severn Valley has the least amount of activity with just six out of 33 parishes with data giving a percentage figure of 18%.

This data can be compared with the previous period (1301-1352) which had the highest number of transfers recorded (see map S18). The Heathland region had the same number of parishes with data (six out of 13) giving a percentage of 46%. However, all of the other regions had much higher percentages of parishes with records of arable transfers than in the second half of the fourteenth century, for example the Clee-Wenlock Uplands

(62%), the Mid Severn Valley (61%), the Northern Plain (57%), the South West Uplands (51%), the Wrekin (47%) and the Weald Moors (40%). The most significant falls in activity were, therefore, in the south of the county, particularly the southeast and most notably in the Mid Severn Valley.

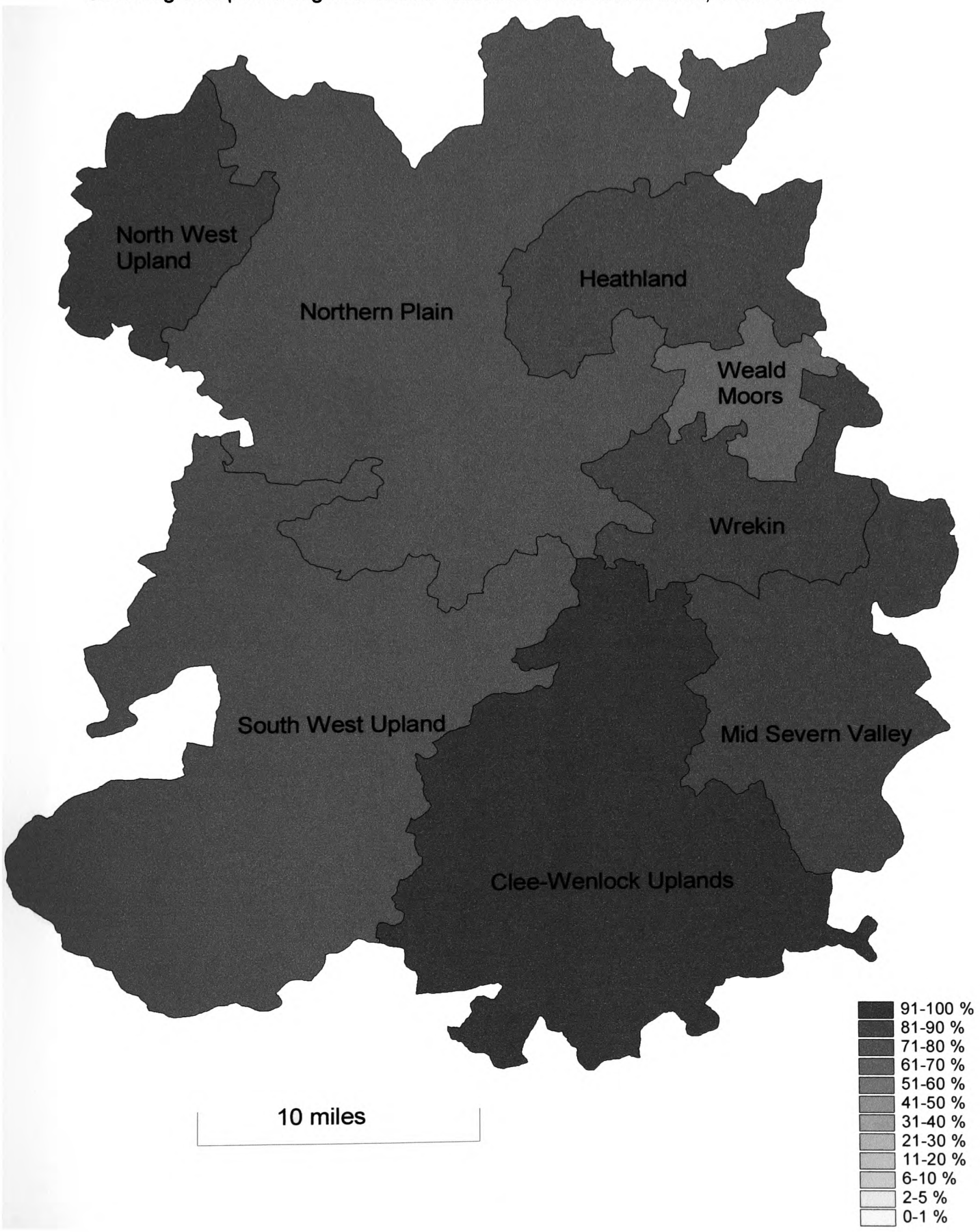
Map S21: Regional percentages, 1405-1456.

The very high figure (95%) of records of arable apparent in the Clee-Wenlock region in this period is interesting because there are significant records of transfers of other land types in the other regions (see maps S31 and S43). Indeed, map S31 reveals that transfers of meadow and pasture were very scarce in the south and southwest of the county in general during this period. Rowley has claimed that in the post-medieval period the Clee-Wenlock region contained districts, such as Corve Dale, with very large arable acreages and a continuation of open field farming and that it was not until the mid seventeenth century that mixed farming began making major inroads.[145] If Rowley's map (S1) is compared with map S22, which shows the distribution of acreages in it can be seen that most of the records of arable transfers in the Clee-Wenlock region, in this period, occurred in the district of the River Corve.

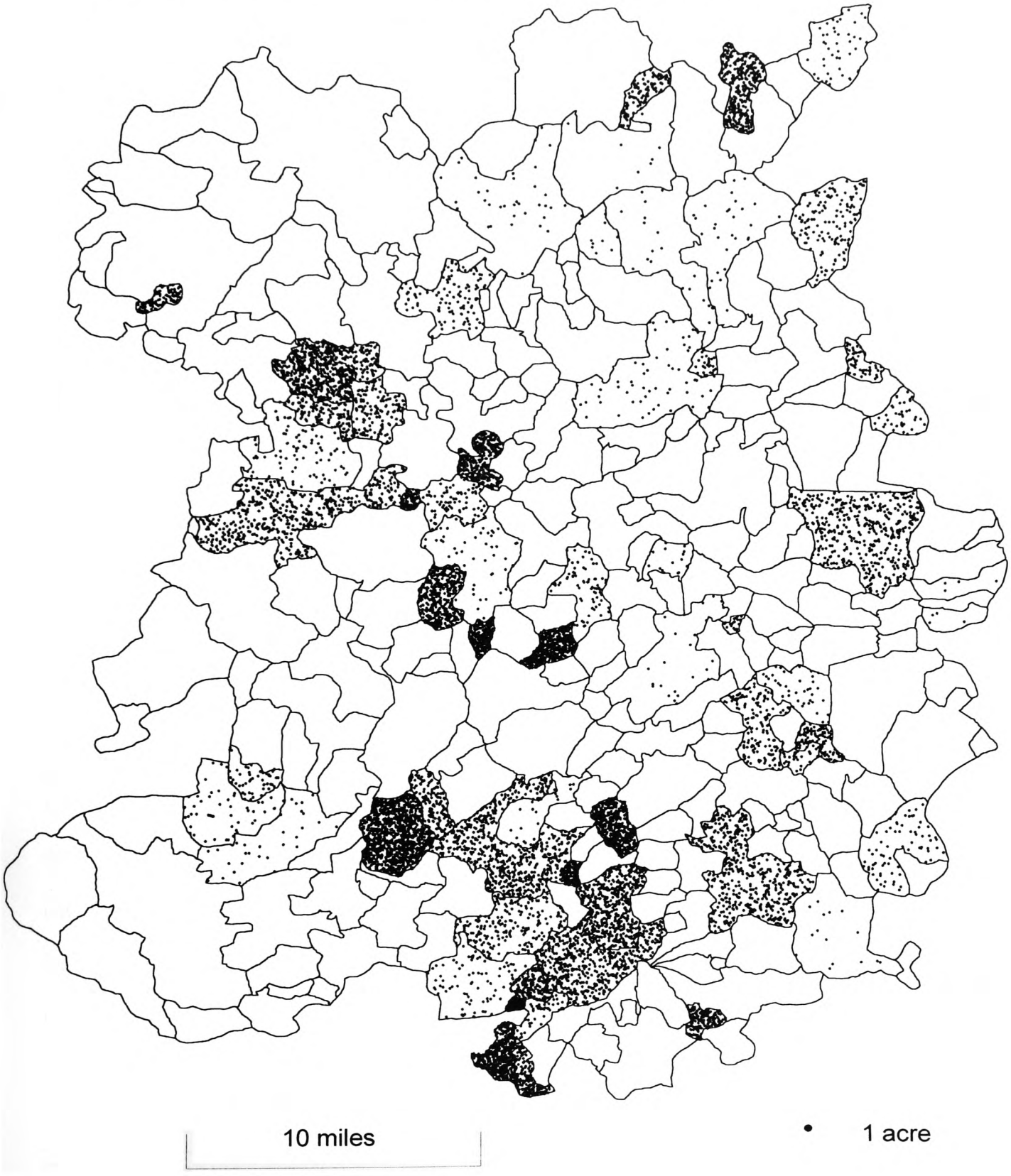
It is likely that the Clee-Wenlock region was the most important arable area of Shropshire throughout the medieval period. This was primarily due to activity in districts such as Corve Dale. The other regions, in general, had a more mixed style of agriculture present from a much earlier date and those districts, outside the Clee-Wenlock region,

[145] Rowley, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-9.

S21: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



S22: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



which did have significant records of arable transfers, seem to have been experimenting with more mixed farming methods by the fifteenth century.

Map S22: Distribution, 1405-1456.

There is continued fragmentation but overall the map is very similar to map S20 with the Wenlock Edge and the Dales Region between the Onny and Corve maintaining its position as the most important arable district. There have been further falls in the north of the county. There is a cluster of records of transfers apparent around the parishes of Alberbury and Cardeston on the western extremes of the South West Upland and the Northern Plain.

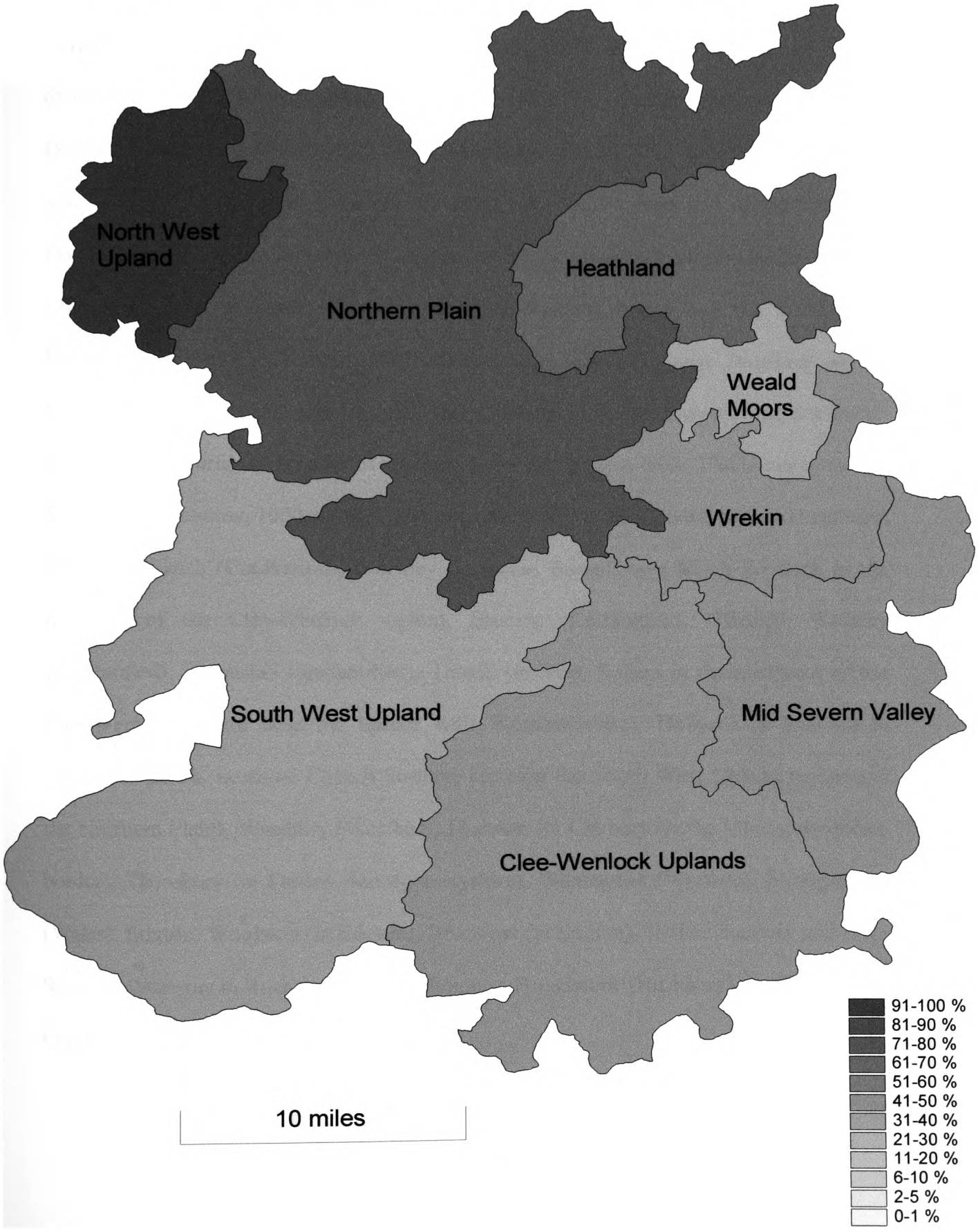
This map highlights the fact that the data from Shropshire is frequently on a sub-regional level, with much of the information for individual regions being concentrated in a few parishes.

Map S23: Regional percentages, 1457-1508.

As in Herefordshire during this period the dramatic fall in the number of fines issued, combined with the rise in the acreage transferred per fine (see table S3) means that direct comparisons between this map and the previous ones is somewhat problematic; the data displayed on the map is heavily influenced by a few transactions. For example, a fine issued in Westminster in 1501 involves the transfer of large amounts of land and property in a number of regions throughout the county.[146] The fine concerns the transfer of the manor of Donington (near Shifnal on the Staffordshire border) from William Leyghton and

[146] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/12.

S23: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.



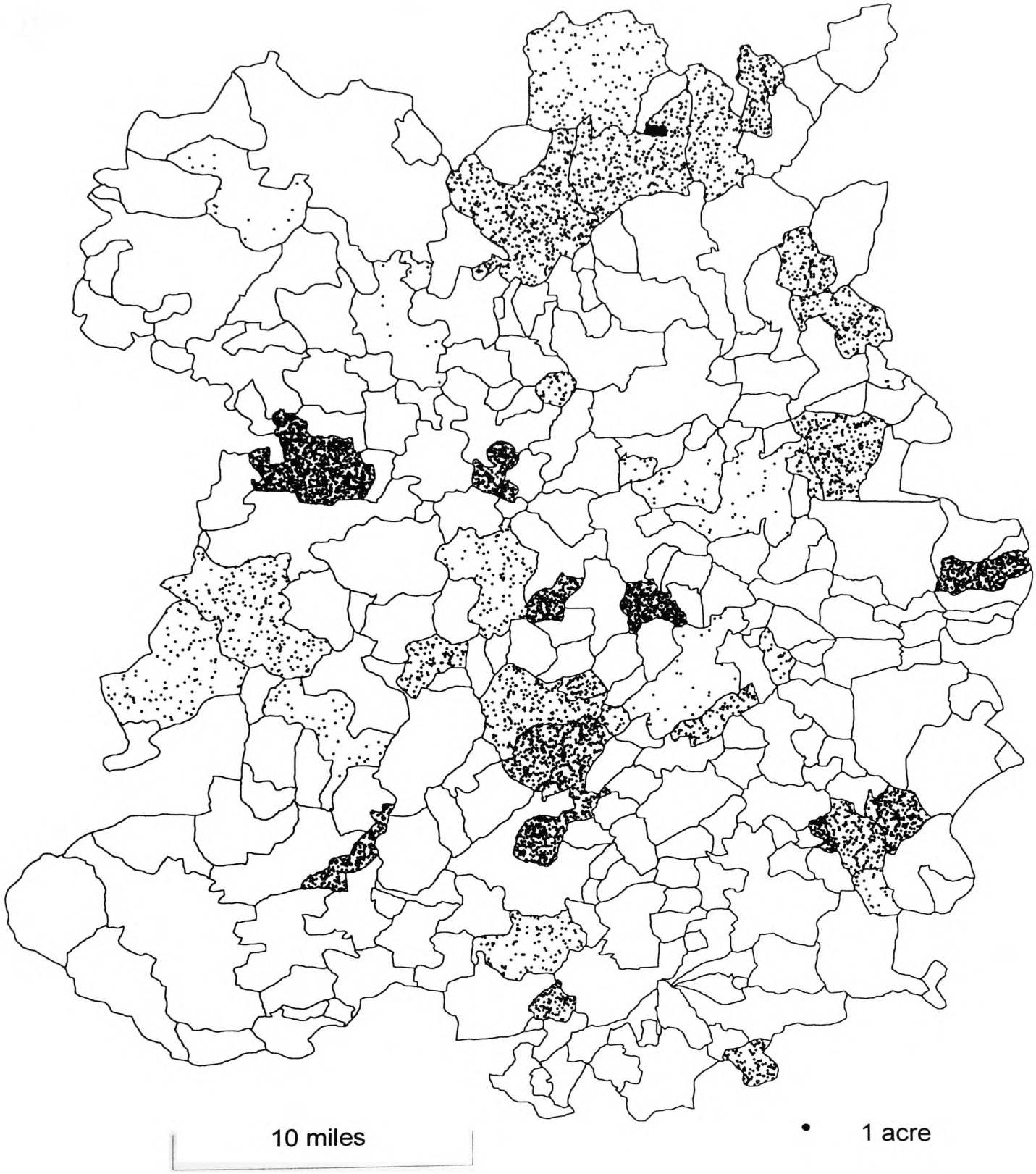
his wife Margia to the Knight, Thomas Leyghton and to Thomas Acton and John Leyghton. The conveyance includes 12 messuages, a mill, 500 acres of arable, 100 acres of meadow, 300 acres of pasture, 60 acres of wood 70 acres of heath and £7 rent in Donington, Kilsall and Shackerley (all in Donington parish). The fine also concerns the advowson of the priory of Brewood (in Albrighton near Shifnal) and of the church of Donington and the transfer of a quarter part of the manors of Plaish (in Cardington near Church Stretton), Rushbury (between the Clee-Wenlock region and the South West Upland), Glazeley (near Quatt in the southeast), Winsbury (near Worthen on the Montgomeryshire border) and Edgton (near Clunbury in the southwest). The document, furthermore, records the transfer of another 76 messuages, two mills, 2000 acres of arable, 500 acres of meadow, 1000 acres of pasture, 1000 acres of wood, 2000 acres of heath and £6 rent in Plaish (Cardington), Muckley (in Acton Round, near Much Wenlock in the northeast of the Clee-Wenlock region), Broome (Cardington), Glazeley, Wadeley (unidentified), Doweshill (unidentified), Tetstill (in Neen Sollars in the southeast of the Clee-Wenlock region near the border with Worcestershire), Hollycot (a lost vill in Smethcott parish, north of Church Stretton between the South West Upland region and the Northern Plain), Winsbury (Worthen), Dudston (in Chirbury on the Montgomeryshire border), Thornbury (in Forden, Montgomeryshire), Wilmington (Worthen), Montgomery (Wales), Edgton, Woolston (in Edgton), Brunslow (in Edgton), Nether Stanway and Over Stanway (Stanway in Rushbury near Cardington), Broadstone (Rushbury) and Bayston (in Condover, south of Shrewsbury).

This single document has had a great effect on the overall dataset, particularly for the Clee-Wenlock and South West Upland regions. The transfer of large amounts of heath may be indicative of the improvement and enclosure of marginal lands during this period. It is difficult, however, to establish exactly where this heath was located because of the number of place-names mentioned in a variety of regions. The information in this fine, and in the other fines for this period, does suggest a significant increase in the transfer of land types other than arable in the Clee-Wenlock Uplands, which may be indicative of a move to more mixed farming in the arable districts of this region. Similarly, the relatively high percentage of arable records on the Northern Plain may be suggestive of an increase in the amount of cultivatable land due to a process of improvement of marginal districts which was certainly noticeable by the early modern period (see section 5.1 above).

Map S24: Distribution, 1457-1508.

The most dramatic feature of this map is the fall in records of arable transfers in the Clee-Wenlock region. For the first time this region has lost its status as a key arable district. Overall, records have become fragmented to a very localized level. The only region with a significant cluster of parishes with data is in the north of the county around Prees on the Northern Plain. The district around Alberbury and Cardeston, in the west, continues to have some significant records of arable transfers and there is a reasonable amount of conveyances around the parishes of Rusbury and Munslow in the Wenlock Edge district.

S24: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.



5.6(iii) Changes in meadow and pasture over time.

1196-1248.

Because of the lack of data for meadow and pasture between 1196 and 1248 there are no maps for these land types in this period. Apart from the mention of common of pasture in Onslow (Bicton) in 1236, [147] the first mention of pasture, which records the acreage transferred, was in 1288 when Robert son of Hugh de Dudmaston acquired ten acres along with a messuage, a mill, 60/- rent, two carucates of arable, ten acres of meadow and ten acres of wood in Dudmaston (Quatt).[148] There are just four acres of meadow recorded in the fines during this period. Firstly, in 1199, Gilbert de Cote acquired an acre of meadow along with 44 acres of arable in Walltown and Lee Brockhurst, from Henry Haer.[149] Secondly, in 1226 Thomas, son of Walter obtained an acre in Shavington.[150] Thirdly, in 1236, Josiana, the wife of William son of Martin, obtained an acre along with five nooks of arable in Magna Lithe, from Odo de Hodnet.[151] Finally, also in 1236, Henry Ketel and his wife, Matilda, acquired an acre along with 69 acres of arable and four acres of wood in Howle, from Hugh de Milevill.[152]

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[147] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/84.

[148] PRO: CP25/1/193/6/23.

[149] PRO: CP25/1/193/2/7.

[150] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/39.

[151] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/89.

[152] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/96.

Map S25: Regional percentages, 1249-1300.

Southern Shropshire has the most significant records of transfers of meadow and pasture in this period. The two northern regions with data have percentages under 1%. In the south, the South West Upland has 2%, the Mid Severn Valley, 1.5% and the Clee-Wenlock Uplands, 1%.

Map S26: Distribution, 1249-1300.

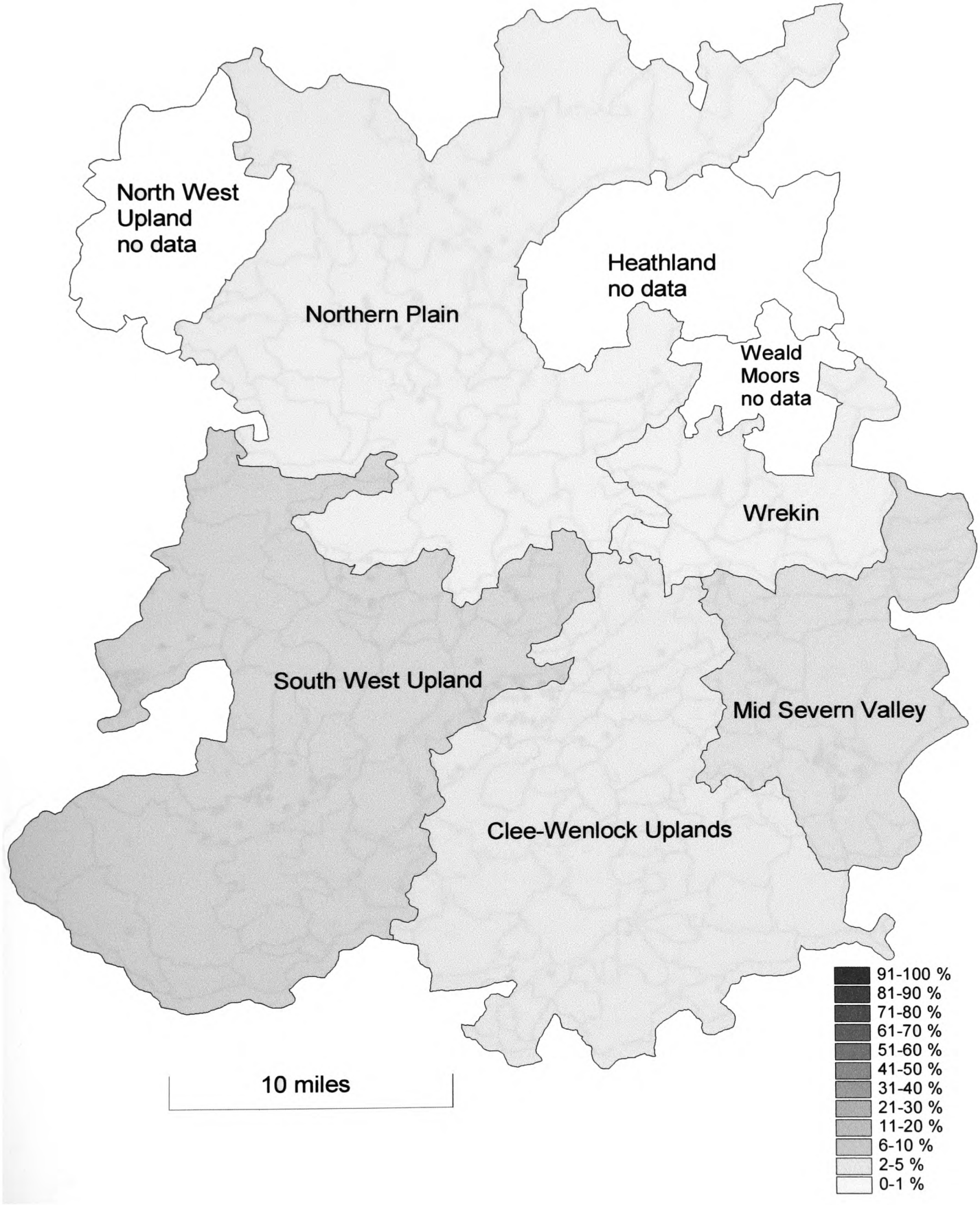
Most of the transfers of meadow and pasture are located south of the River Severn. There are noticeable clusters in the following parishes, Church Stoke and Chirbury (on the Montgomeryshire border), Lydbury North (in the southwest), a group of parishes around Rushbury (Wenlock Edge and the Dales district), Quatt (in the southeast) and Wem (Northern Plain). The increase in activity is primarily due to the increase in the amount of meadow transferred in individual fines. For example, in 1292, a fine issued in Stafford records the surrender of 20 acres of meadow, along with one carucate of arable, 30 acres of wood, 20/- rent and the moiety of one mill, from Yororth son of Yororth (W. Iorwerth) and his wife, Matilda, to Peter, son of Peter Corbet, in the parish of Churchstoke, on the Montgomeryshire border.[153] There is no increase in the number of fines recording pasture in this period although the average acreage per fine has increased (see table S4).

MapS27: Regional percentages, 1301-1352.

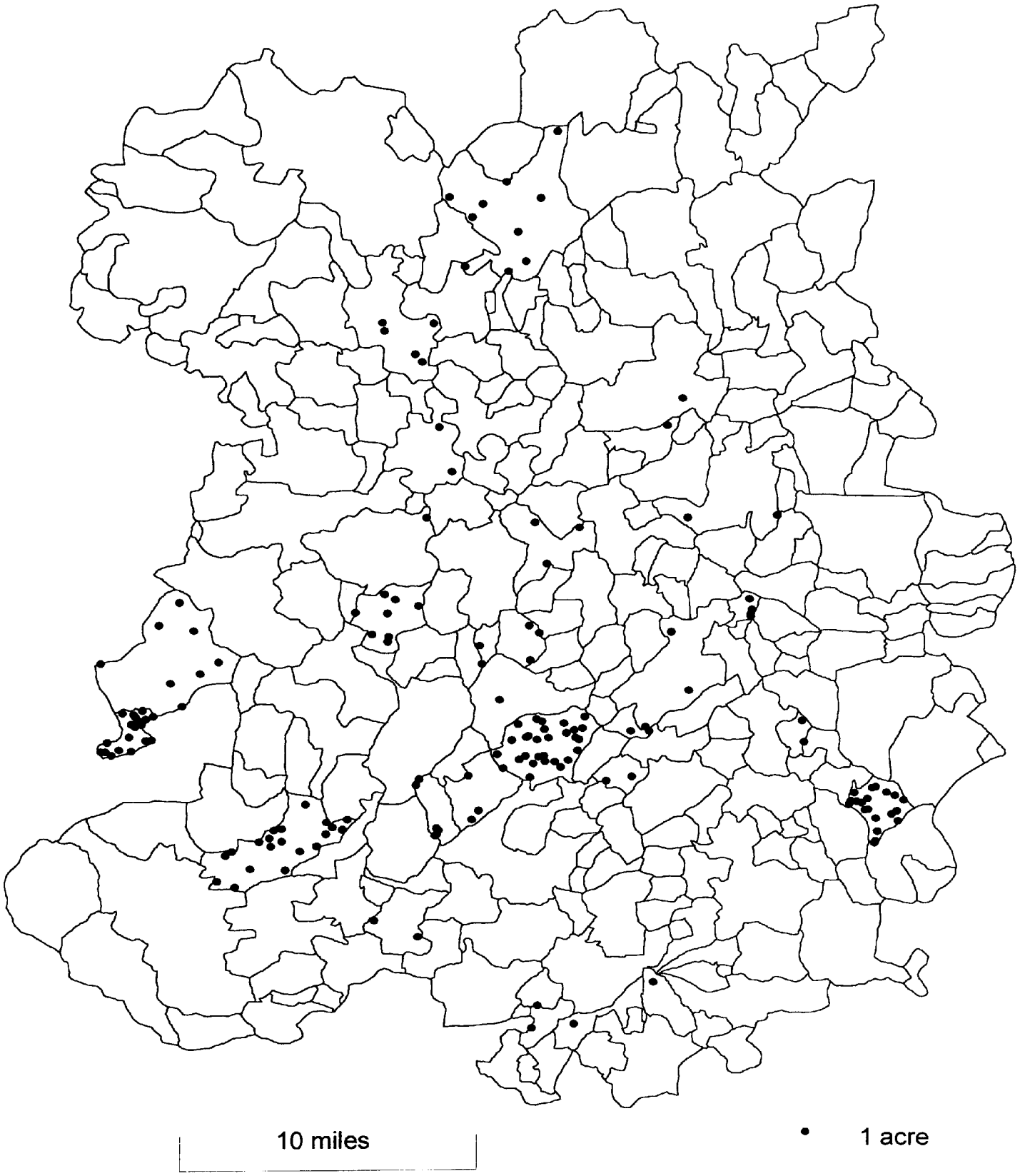
There is a notable increase in the amount of meadow and pasture transferred in

[153] PRO: CP25/1/193/6/63.

S25: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.



S26: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.



northern Shropshire with the Northern Plain having a similar percentage to the Clee-Wenlock region (4% and 5% respectively). The data suggests a slight increase in the amount of meadow and pasture transferred throughout Shropshire during this period. When tables H9, G3 and S4 are compared it appears that these land types are of much less significance than in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire during this period and in the thirteenth century. This reinforces Stamper's claim, from the evidence of *Inquisitions post mortem,* that Shropshire had one of the lowest percentages of meadow in comparison with arable in the whole country.[154] Stamper explains that Shropshire's very important livestock economy was supported by extensive upland grazing areas, woodland pastures and large tracts of permanent grassland and moor.[155] This is also interesting because it shows that the data from feet of fines is establishing evidence that is common to other sources.

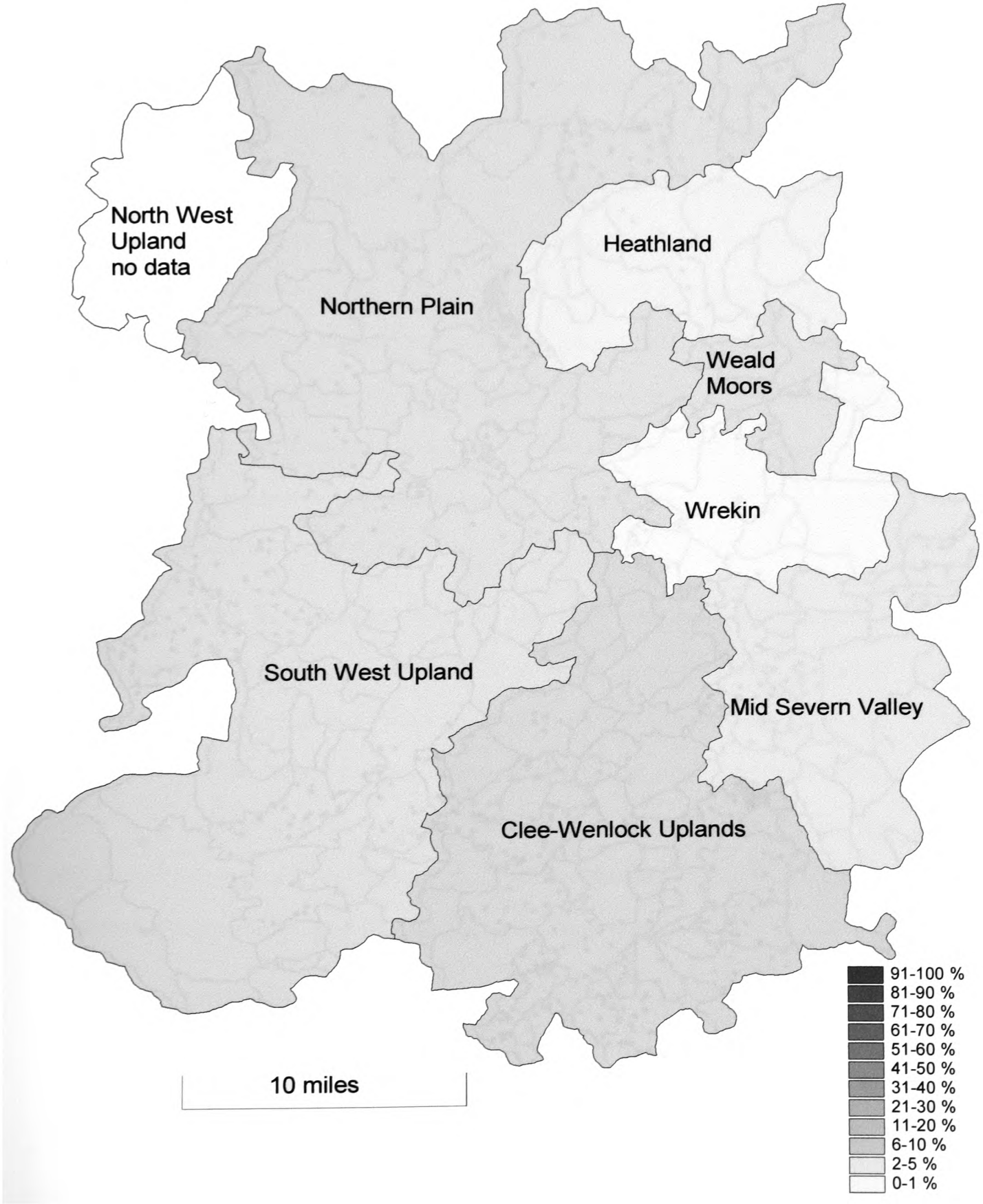
Map S28: Distribution, 1301-1352.

The parishes of Chirbury and Church Stoke continue to have important clusters of meadow and pasture recorded in this period, there is also some mentioned in the adjacent parish of Worthen. Overall, the Clee-Wenlock region has emerged with the most significant spread of transfers, especially in the Teme Valley and around the parish of Diddlebury. A narrow band of transfers is apparent to the east and west of Shrewsbury, following the line of the River Severn. There has also been an increase in the amount transferred on the Northern Plain, especially in northeast. A small cluster has also emerged in the east around Albrighton on the Staffordshire border.

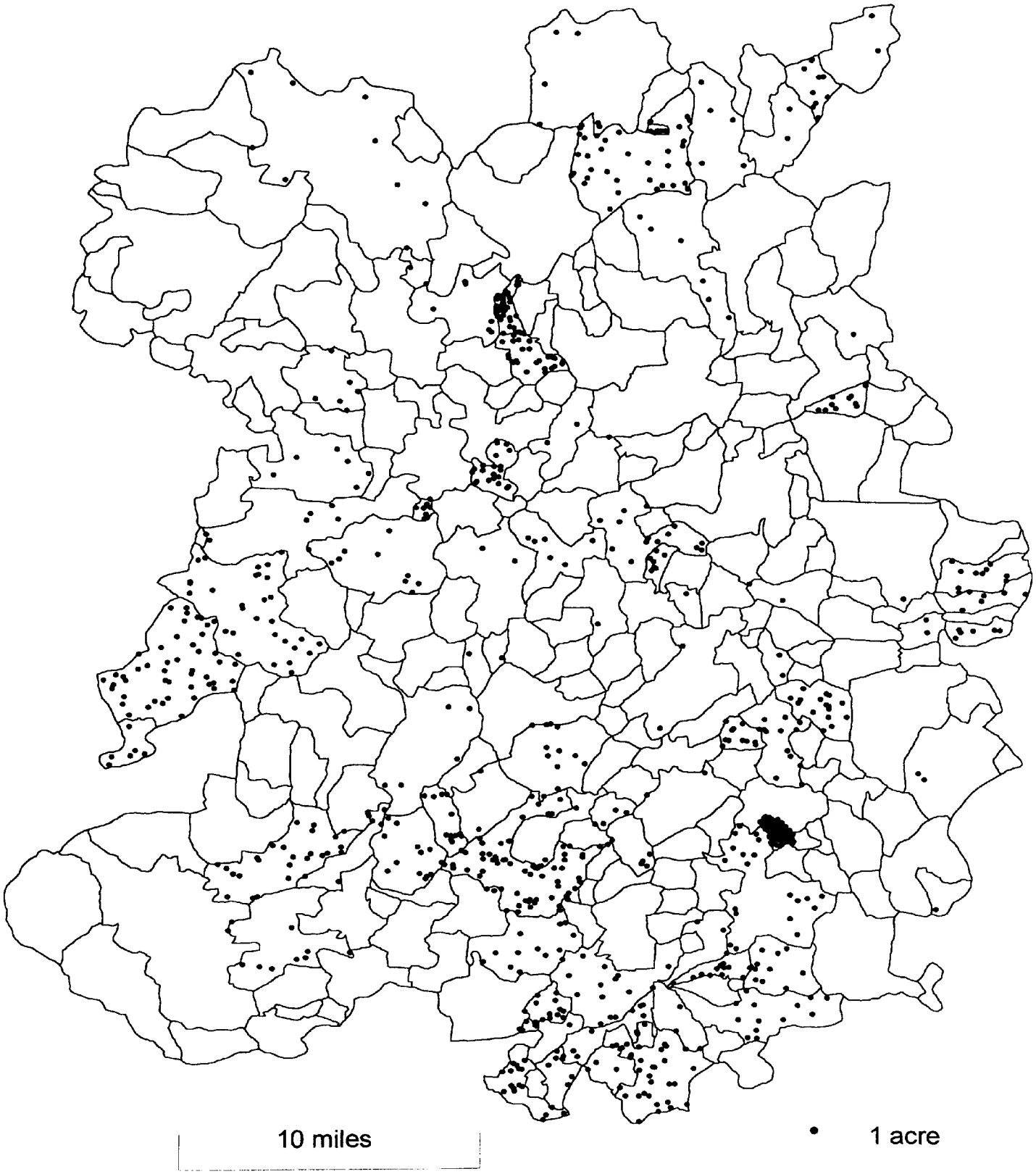
[154] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[155] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

S27: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.



S28: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.



Map S29: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

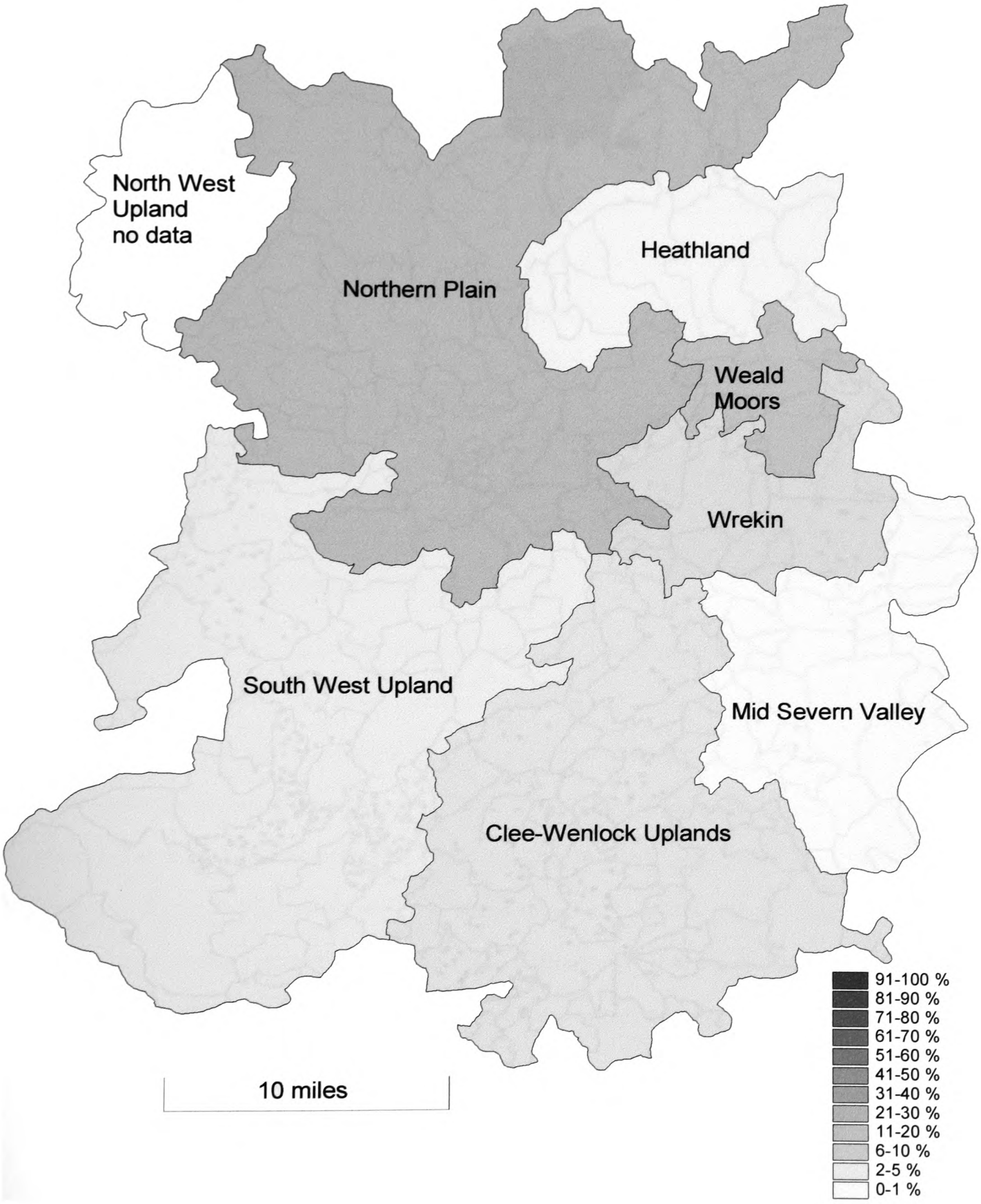
This map indicates a massive rise in transfers of meadow and pasture in northern Shropshire, particularly on the Northern Plain and the Weald Moors. However, the high percentage recorded for the Northern Plain (16%) is primarily due to one transaction issued in 1368 involving the transfer of over a thousand acres of pasture in Whitchurch and mentioned in relation to map S19 above.[156] Although the data is mainly concerned with the parish of Whitchurch, map S30 below reveals transfers of meadow and pasture in a group of parishes in the northeast from Whixall to Market Drayton. This is interesting because this area, particularly around Whitchurch, was to develop as an important dairying district by the seventeenth century (see section 5.1 above). It is possible that this group of parishes began to experiment with dairying as a major part of their economy during the late medieval period.

The evidence for the Weald Moors is a little more conclusive, particularly when the data for map S31 below is considered. Three out of the ten parishes in the Weald Moors have reasonably significant records of meadow and pasture in comparison with arable. Stamper has claimed that this region became an important livestock-fattening district in the late sixteenth century (see section 5.1 above). It is possible that the high percentages of meadow and pasture transfers recorded in the fifteenth century, particularly in the later fifteenth century, represent the origins of this development.

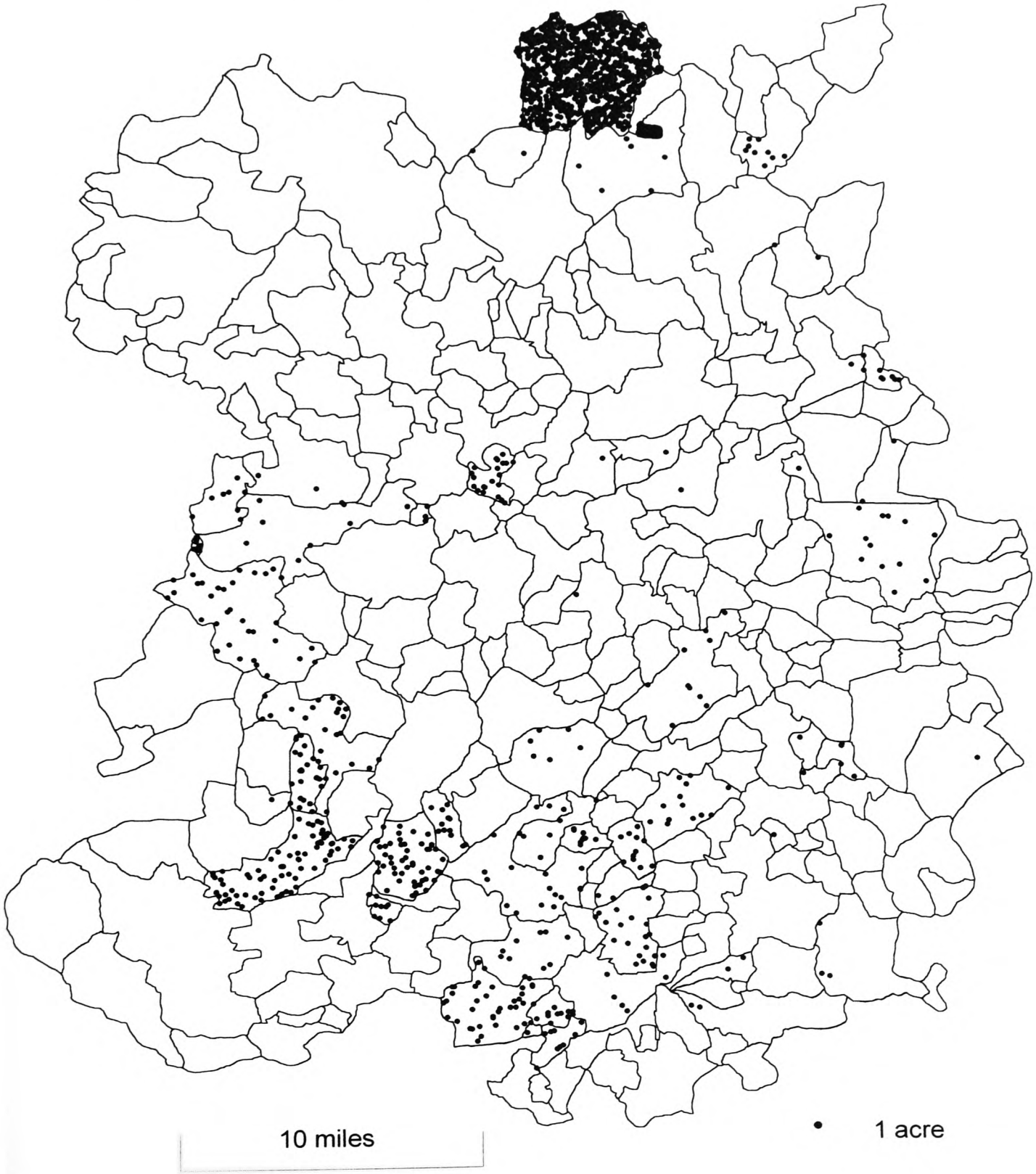
In terms of distribution, when the evidence for Whitchurch and the Weald Moors

[156] PRO: CP25/1/195/17/29.

S29: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



S30: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



has been considered, most of the other records of transfers of meadow and pasture appear in southern Shropshire (see map S30).

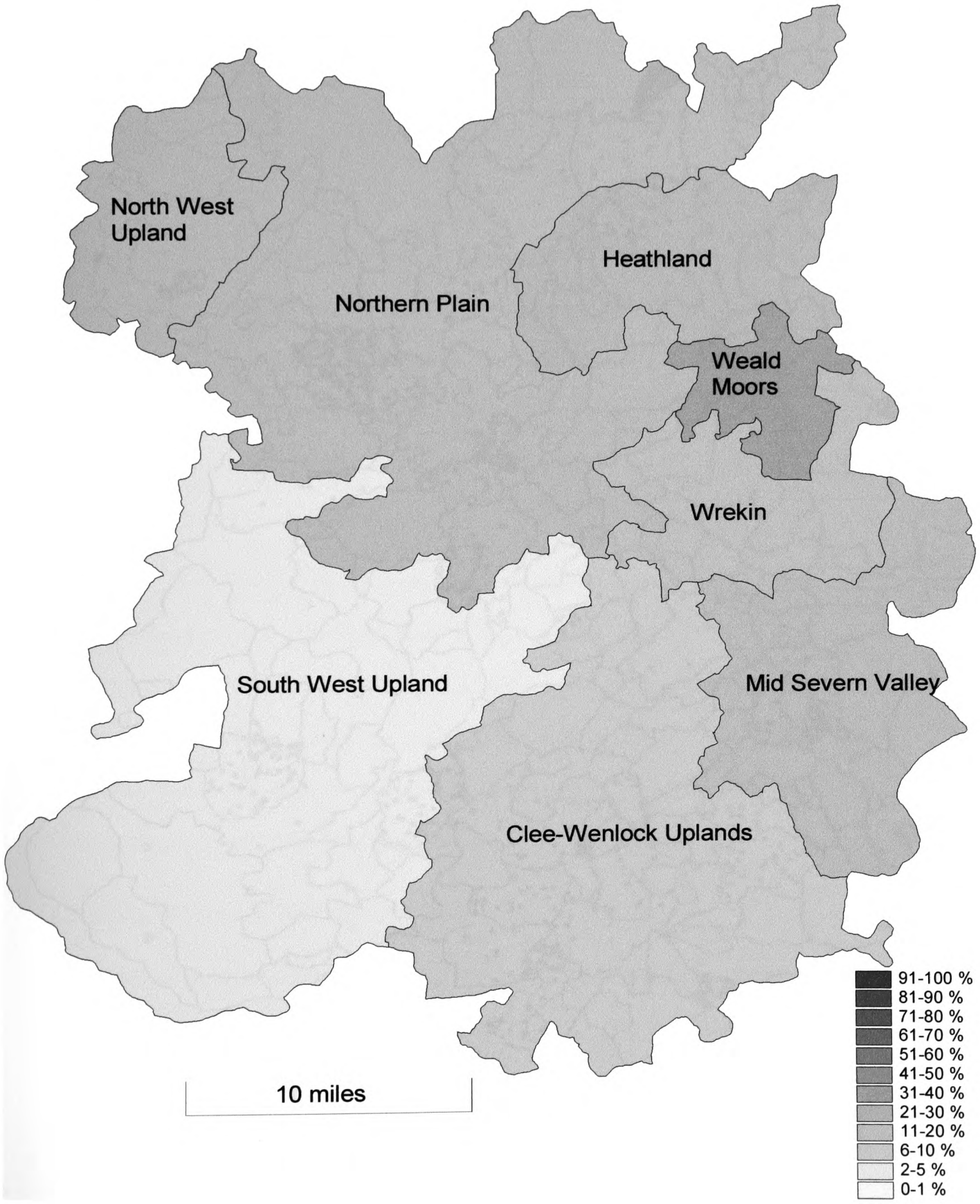
Map S30: Distribution, 1353-1404.

There has been fall in distribution and density of transfers of meadow and pasture in the Teme Valley. In terms of overall regional distribution the Clee-Wenlock district maintains its position as having the most parishes with data. There is still a reasonable cluster on the Montgomeryshire border around the parishes of Wollaston, Westbury and Worthen. The band noticeable either side of Shrewsbury in map S28 has now become condensed to the area immediately around Shrewsbury, and records of meadow and pasture on the Northern Plain are now almost completely limited to the extreme north-west (see map S29 above).

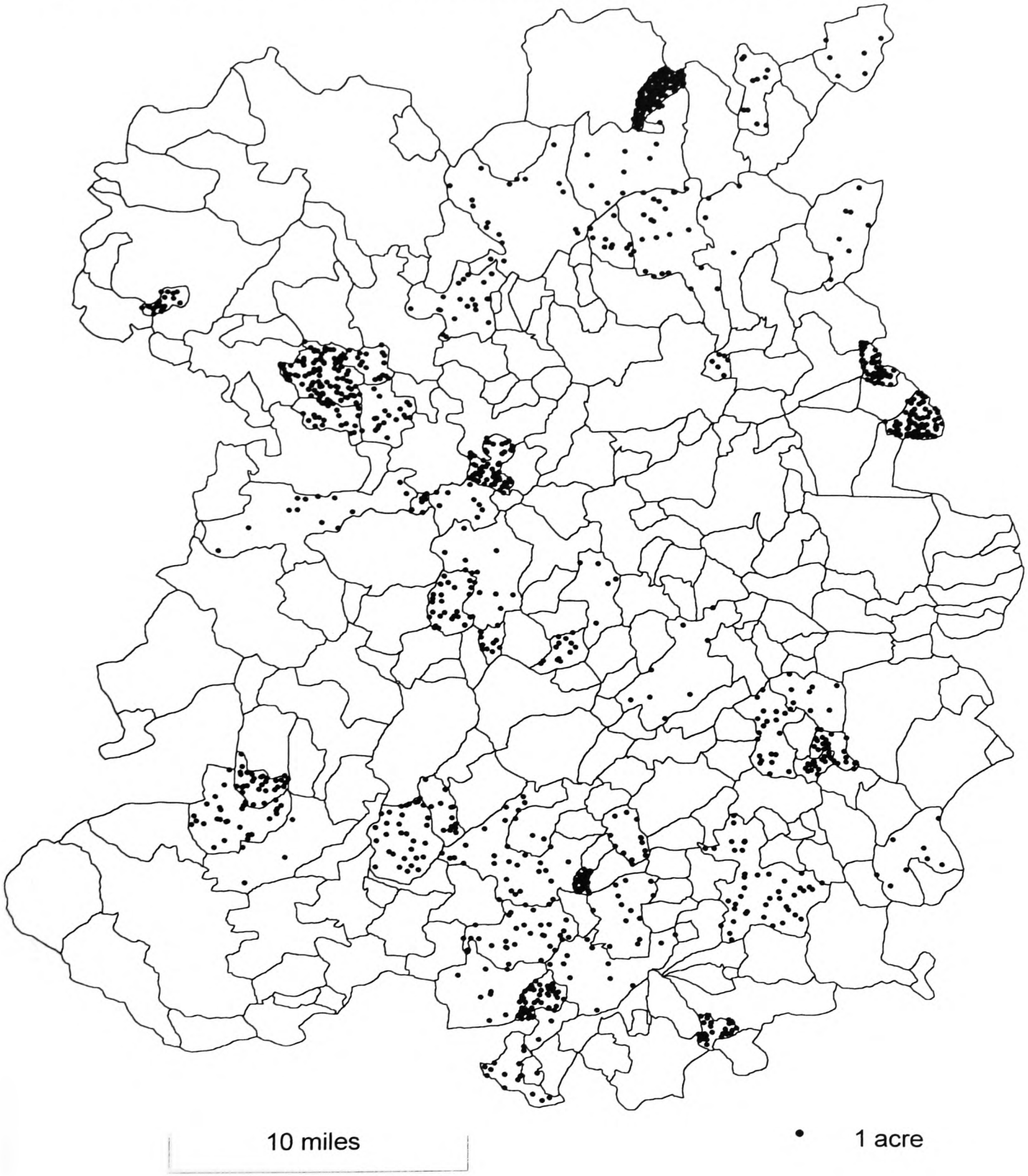
Map S31: Regional percentages, 1405-1456.

The significance of the Weald Moors is even more apparent in this period with a figure of 36%; over double that of the next most significant region, the adjacent Heathland (17%). Indeed, the Weald Moors appear to be at the centre of a notable rise in transfers of meadow and pasture in the north and east of the county; all the regions have percentage figures in excess of 10% with the exception of the Clee-Wenlock Uplands (6%) and the South West Upland (4%). It is interesting to compare this map with the map revealing the distribution of transfers of meadow and pasture (S32 below). This is a good example of how the two different types of map help tell the whole story; map S31, for example,

S31: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



S32: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



reveals the Weald Moors as the most important region in percentage terms whereas map S32 shows the Clee-Wenlock region as having the most widespread distribution of parishes with data, despite having a low total percentage.

Map S32: Distribution, 1405-1456.

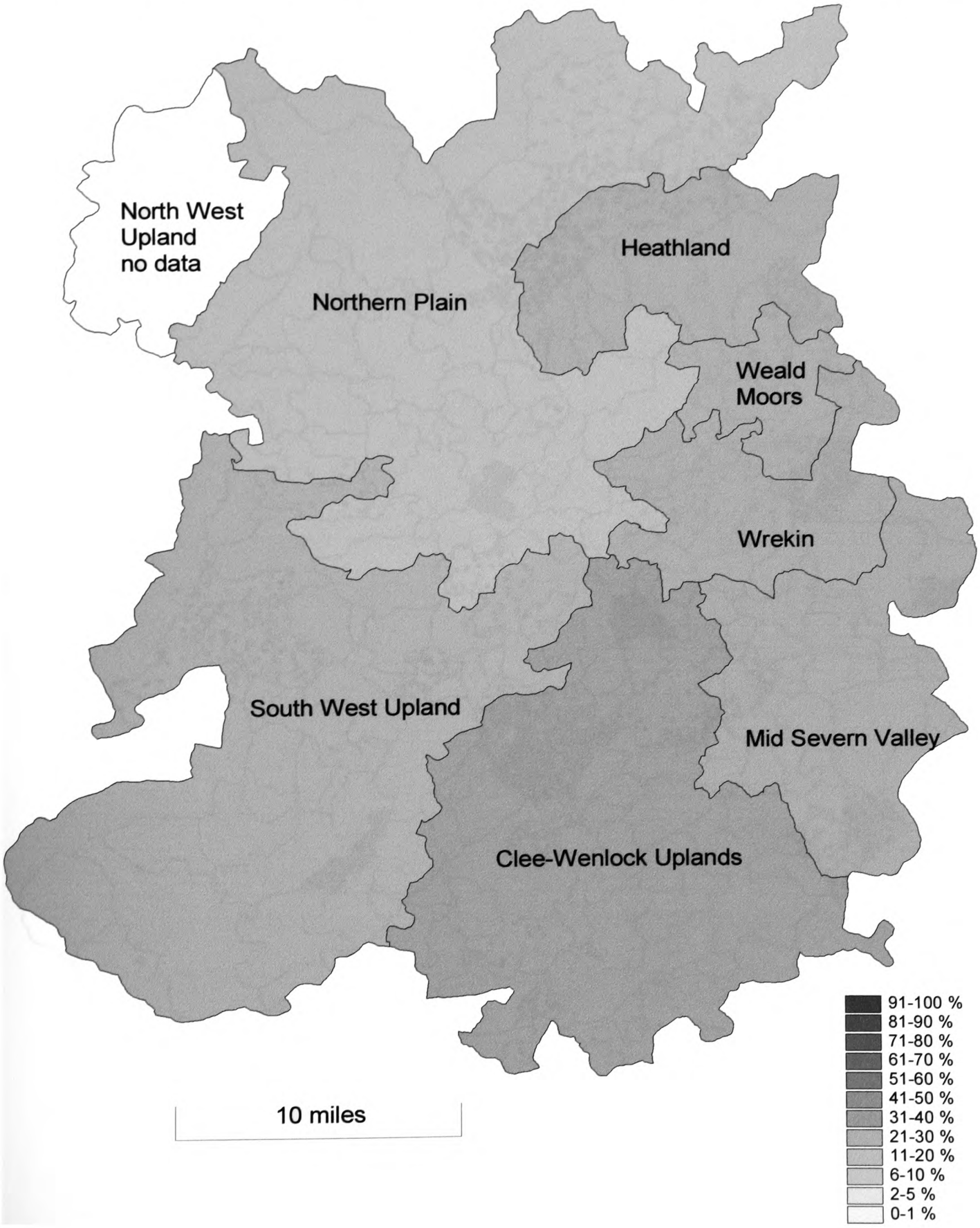
The evidence for the Weald Moors is shown to be due to very high acreages recorded for two parishes: Woodcote and Newport on the Staffordshire border. The district in the northeast of the Northern Plain has continued to reveal important records of transfers of meadow and pasture in the future Northern Dairying Area, notably around the parish of Ightfield. Another district has emerged on the Northern Plain with significant records, centred on Shrewsbury, particularly to the northwest of the city around Great Ness.

The Clee-Wenlock region continues to be important in terms of the number of parishes with data but in percentage terms is less significant than the northern regions (see map S31 above). The South West Upland is very sparse both in terms of distribution and overall percentage. The data for this region is primarily limited to a group of parishes on the Welsh border: Lydham, Bishops Castle and Lydbury North and a small grouping around Wistanstow near the Clee-Wenlock region.

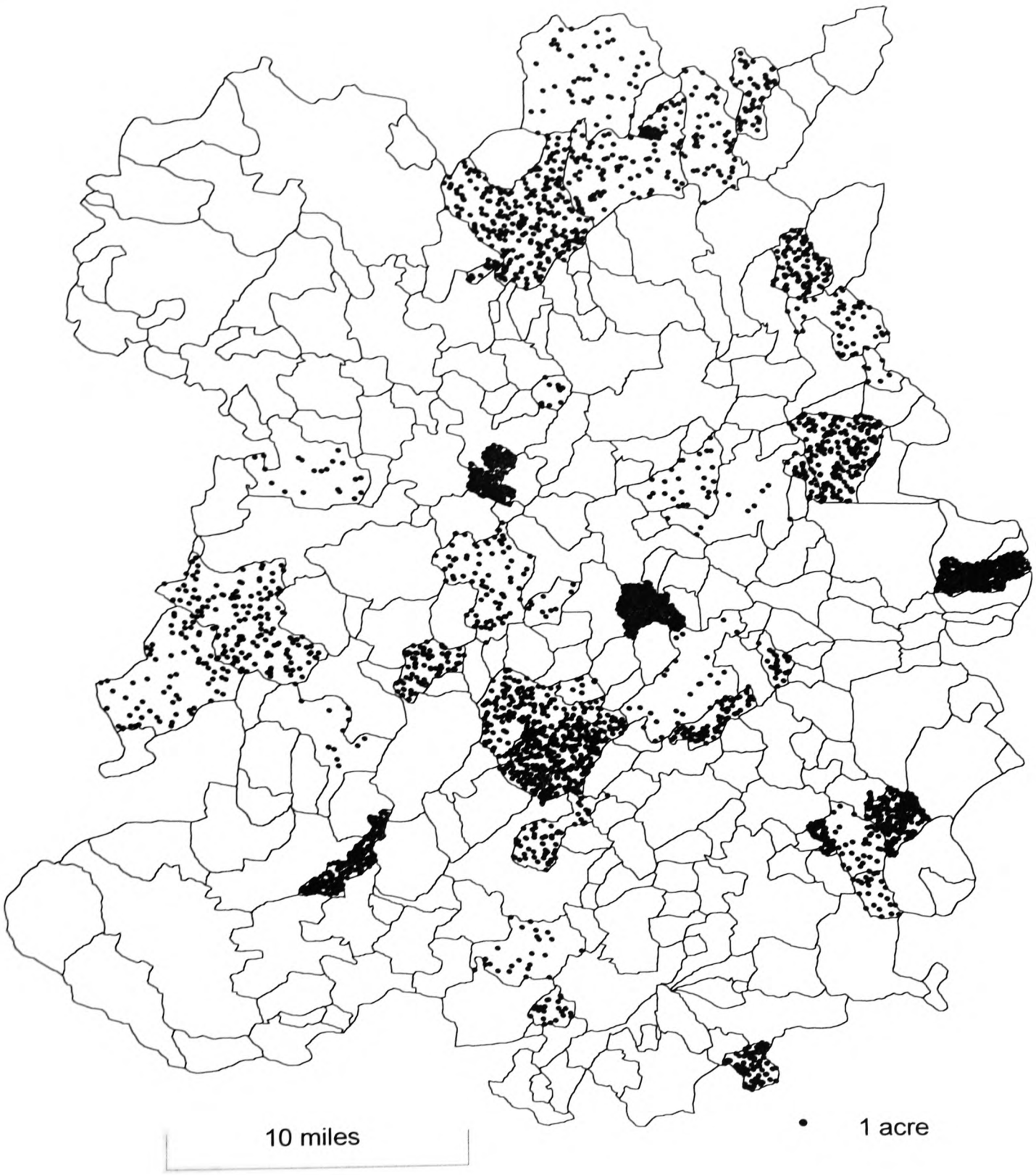
Map S33: Regional percentages, 1457-1508.

The change in the nature of fines, the fall in the numbers issued during this period and the effect that individual fines, such as the one of 1501 between members of the

S33: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.



S34: Distribution of meadow and pasturerecorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508..



Leyghton family,[157] have been discussed in relation to map S23 above. This fine and the one for Quatt and Lilleshall, mentioned in relation to map S34 below, help explain the apparent rise in the significance of regions such as the Clee-Wenlock Uplands and the Mid Severn Valley in terms of records of meadow and pasture. Overall, the percentage figures for all the regions are relatively close (mainly between 20% and 30%). This is indicative of the tremendous rise in the average area of meadow and pasture transferred per fine in this period (see table S4).

Map S34: Distribution, 1457-1508.

Although there is a drastic fall in the number of fines issued during this period, there is an increase in the density of meadow recorded compared with the last distribution map. This is due to the great increase in the average area of land transferred per fine mentioned above. For example, in Quatt and Lilleshall in 1493, Edward Willoughby, a clerk, along with Henry Strangways, esquire and Dorothea, his wife, obtained 20 messuages, 600 acres of arable, 200 acres of meadow, 200 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood, 600 acres of heath and the manors of Quatt and Lilleshall.[158]

The map suggests a fall in the distribution of transfers of meadow and pasture in the Clee-Wenlock region, despite having the highest percentage recorded in map S33 above. The parishes of Worthen and Chirbury on the Montgomeryshire border have, as in previous periods, proved to be at the centre of an important area of activity. Density and

[157] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/12.

[158] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/7.

distribution has increased noticeably in the region that was to become the Northern Dairying Area.

5.6(iv) Changes in wood over time.

Map S35: Regional percentages, 1196-1248.

There is very little data relating to woodland transfers in this period although it is perhaps not surprising that the one region with a significant percentage is the Wrekin (this was, and still is, a very heavily wooded region). The evidence relates to the transfer of 60 acres of wood in Stirchley in 1246 and has been mentioned in relation to map S13 above.[159]

Map S36: Distribution, 1196-1248.

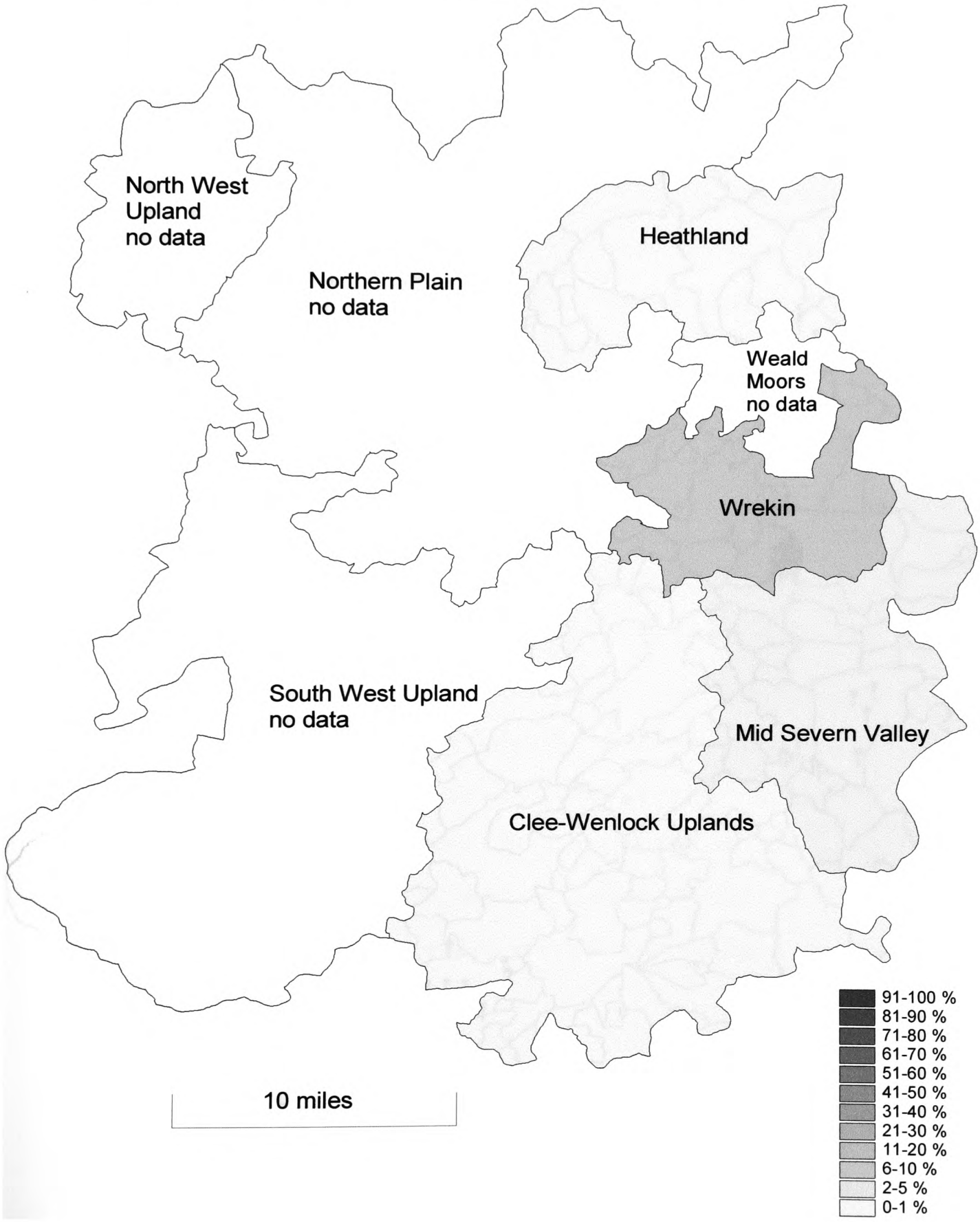
The number of fines which record wood in this period is limited. In this map, records of woodland transfers are primarily limited to the east of the county, especially in the parish of Stirchley. There is also a reasonably significant grouping at Chetwynd on the Staffordshire border, around Astley Abbots in the Mid Severn Valley and at Bromfield on the Herefordshire border.

Map S37: Regional percentages, 1249-1300.

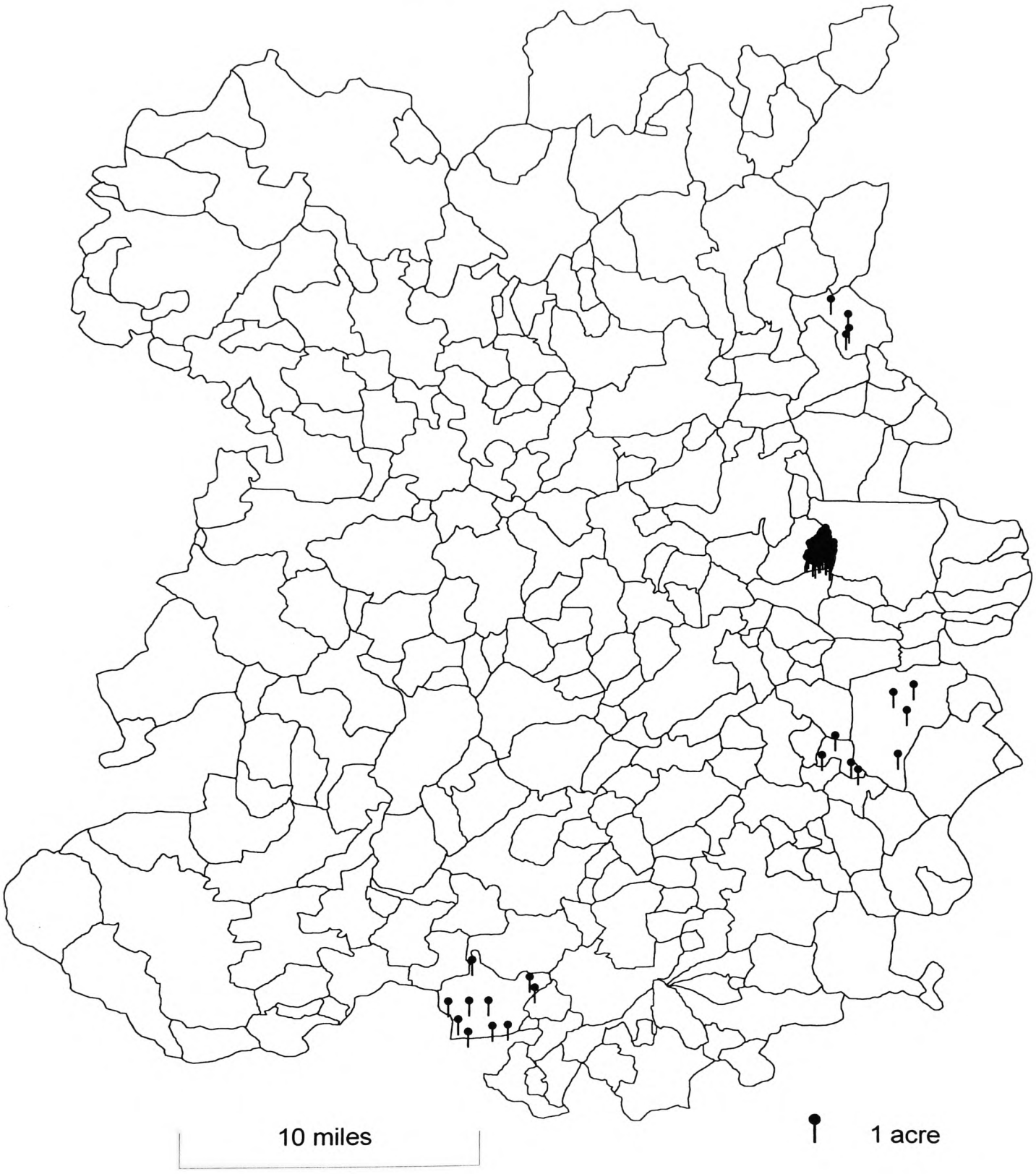
There is an increase in the amount of fines mentioning woodland conveyances and the average amount of wood transferred in this period. Stamper has claimed that by the

[159] PRO:CP25/1/193/3/159.

S35: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.



S36: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1248.



late thirteenth century the amount of forest in Shropshire had been drastically reduced by assarting.[160] It is interesting that the vast majority of woodland transfers recorded in fines during this period occur in the South West Upland region (27.5%). Most of the data is due to the transfer of six carucates of wood in Berkwood in Mocktree (Leintwardine North) from Walter de Hopton to Richard Bacon in 1255.[161] However, even without this fine there remain a comparatively high percentage of woodland transfers in the South West Upland. Therefore, southwest Shropshire appears to have been an important region for woodland conveyances during the later thirteenth century; it is possible that new settlement and woodland clearances were occurring in this region in this period.

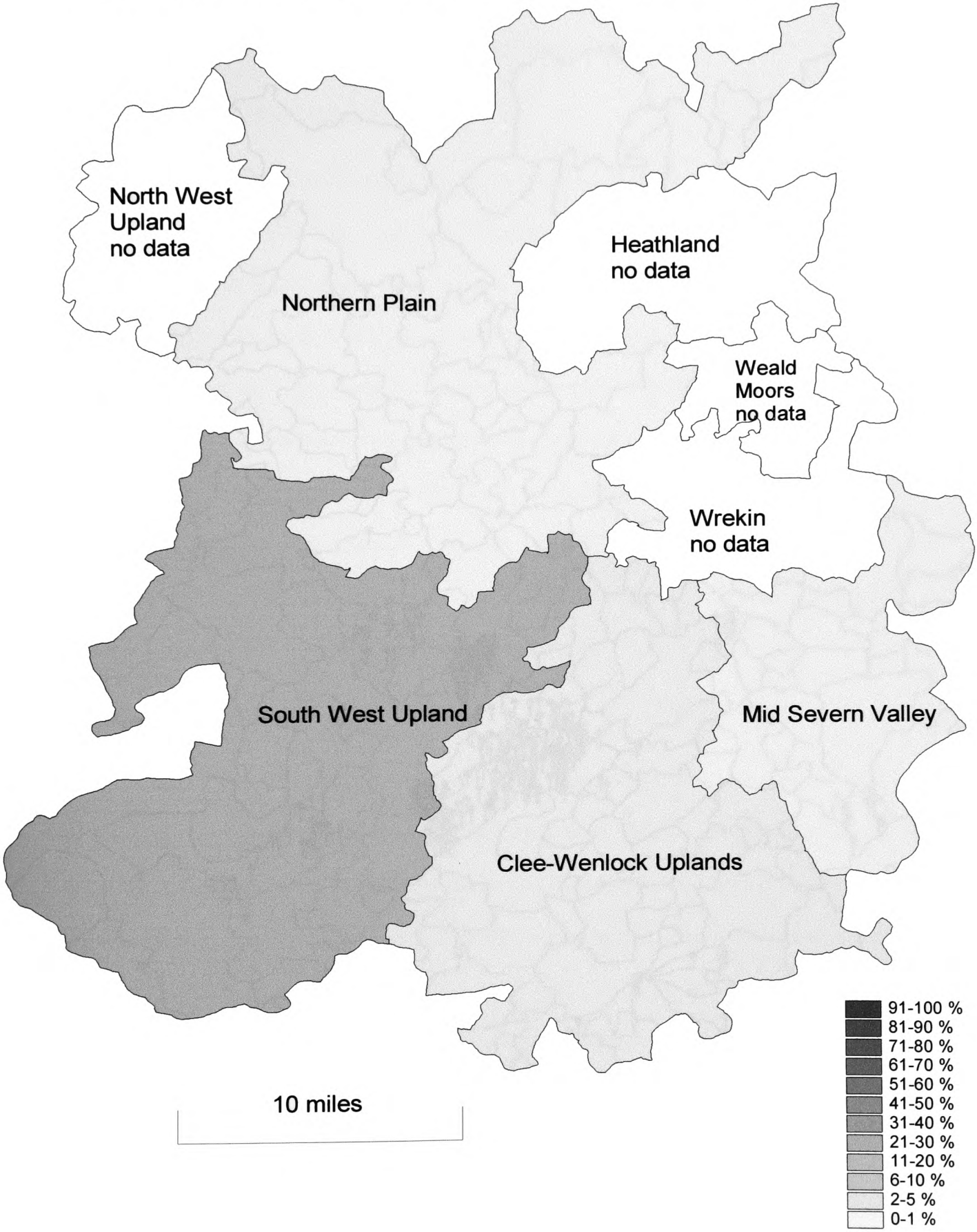
Map S38: Distribution, 1249-1300.

This map reveals the distribution of woodland conveyances on a parish level. Almost all the wood recorded in fines during this period is south of the River Severn. The map reveals the dense cluster of woodland in the parish of Leintwardine North, on the Herefordshire border, mentioned in relation to map S37. It also reveals a significant group of parishes on the edge of the South West Upland, the Clee-Wenlock Region and the Northern Plain, around Leebotwood, Rushbury and Acton Scott. There is an interesting spread of data in the parishes of the extreme south of the Clee-Wenlock region, around Coreley and some notable clusters in the parishes of Quatt and Benthall (Mid Severn Valley) and on the Montgomeryshire border around Church Stoke. The map reveals that

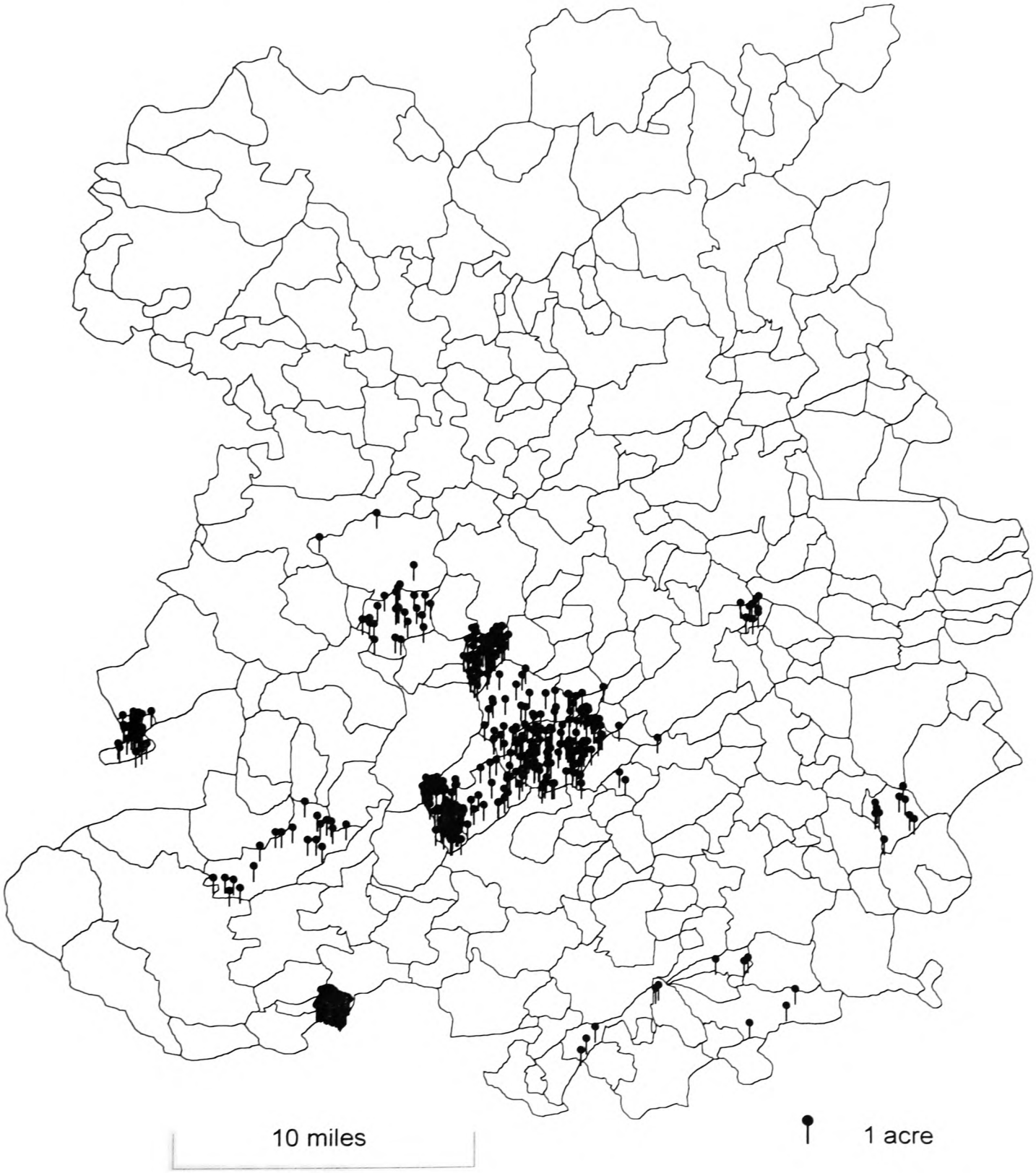
[160] Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

[161] PRO: CP25/1/193/4/55.

S37: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.



S38: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1249-1300.



woodland was being transferred in significant quantities in various parts of the county at this time and that the southwest was a particularly important district in this process.

Map S39: Regional percentages, 1301-1352.

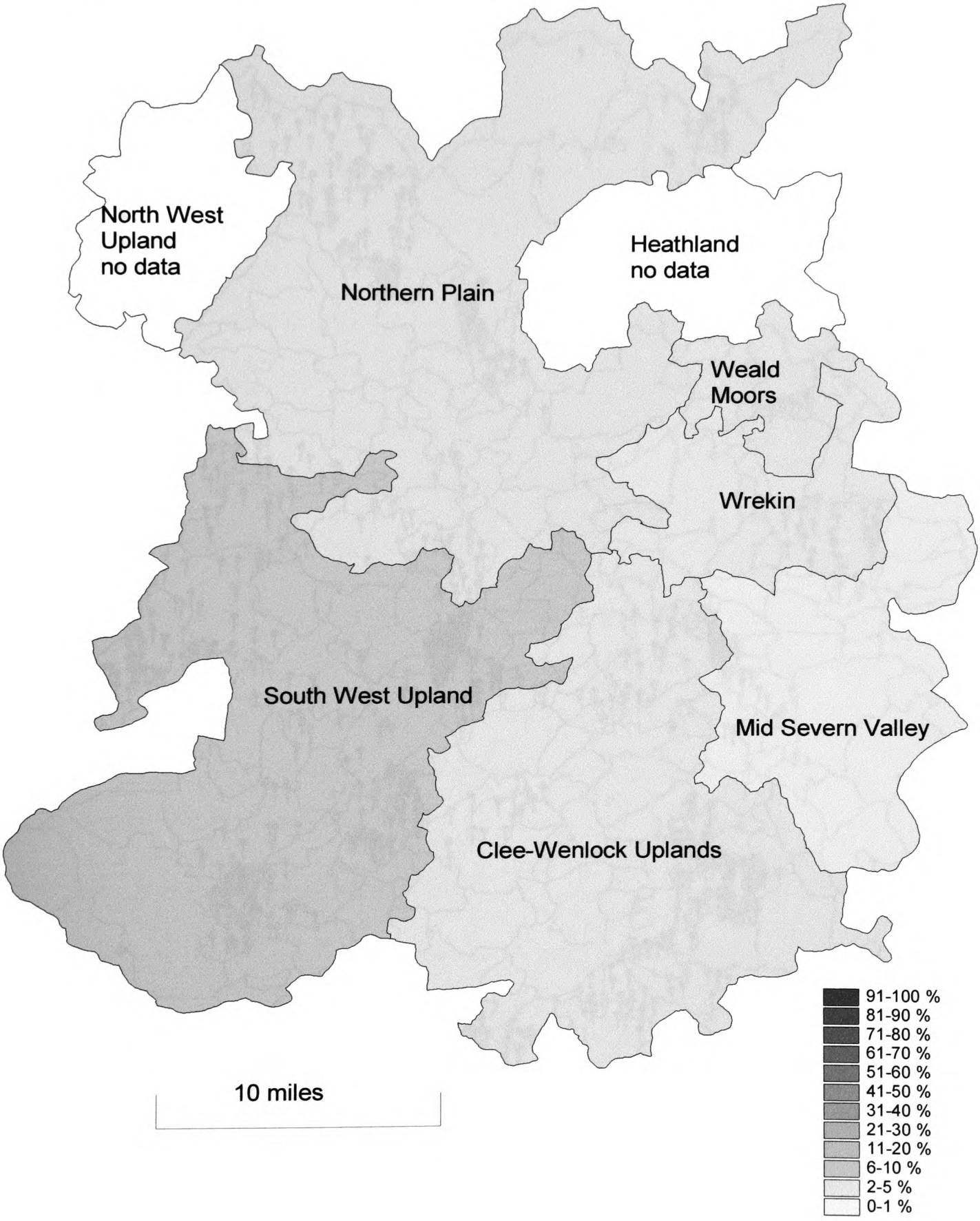
This map continues to reveal the South West Upland as the most significant region of woodland transfers. Although it has a much lower percentage (7%) than in map S37 it still has a significantly higher figure than the other regions with data which are all between 2% and 4.5%. This suggests that if woodland was being cleared in Shropshire to create cultivatable land for new settlement in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries then, according to the evidence in feet of fines it was primarily in the south and west of the county. Map S40 below reinforces this hypothesis as it reveals that records of woodland conveyances were more widespread in the South West Upland region than in any other region. This appears to coincide with Jack's view that assarting was "common enough in the Welsh hinterland of Shropshire in the fourteenth century."[162]

Map S40: Distribution, 1301-1352.

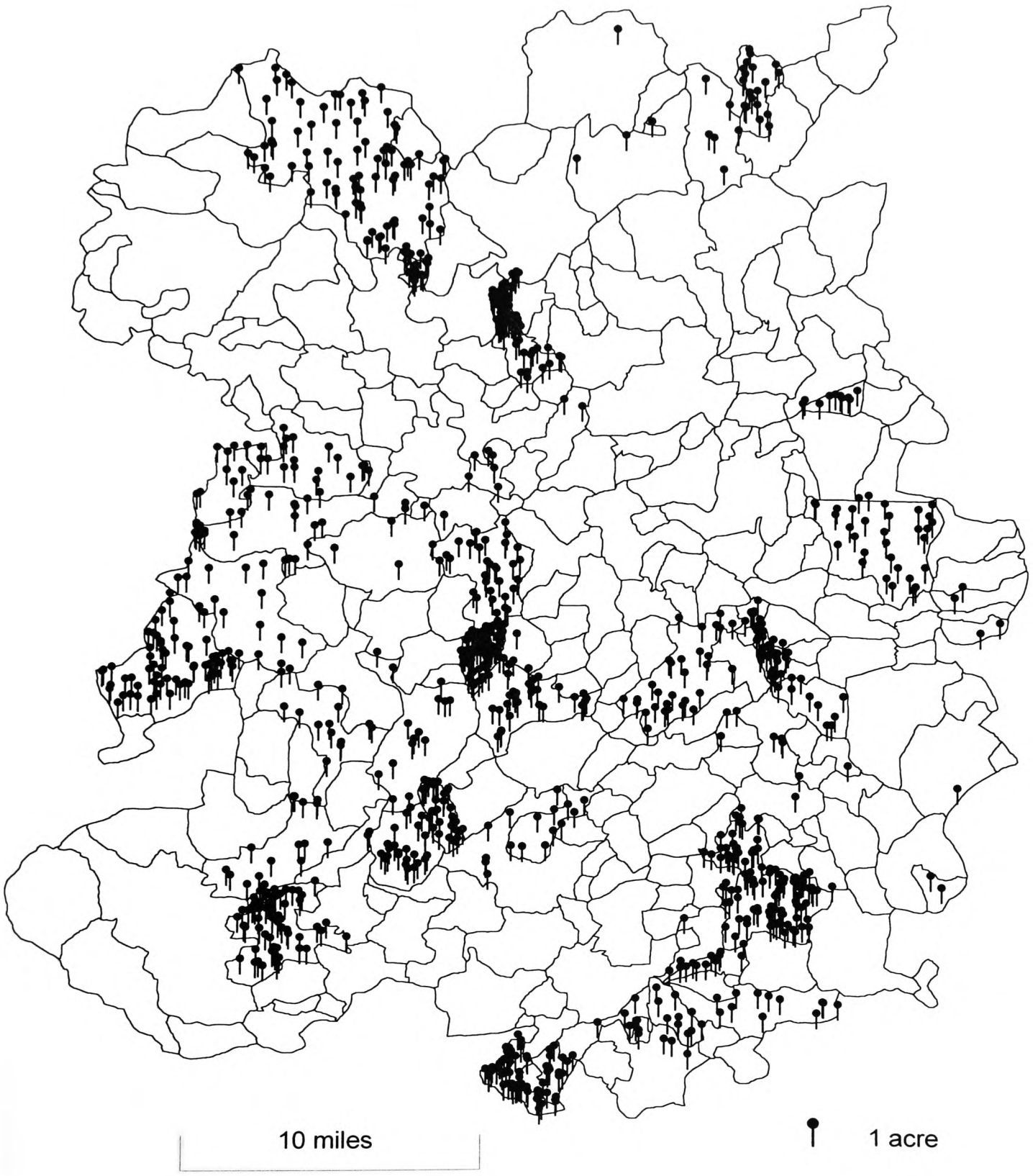
Woodland transfers are at their most extensive in this map. They occur in all the regions of the county with the exception of the North West Uplands and the Heathlands. Most of the records appear in the south of the county. The South West Upland region has the most significant spread of data with the majority of parishes in this region having some records of woodland conveyance. There is an interesting sub-region apparent in the south and east of the Clee-Wenlock region, especially around Ludford and Neen Savage. On the

[162] Jack, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, p. 266.

S39: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352,.



S40: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1301-1352.



Northern Plain the most significant parishes are Broughton, in the centre of the region, Ellesmere in the northwest and around Adderley in the northeast.

Map S41: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

The massive increase in the percentage of woodland transfers on the Northern Plain is due to the transfer, in Whitchurch, of over 1000 acres of wood in one transaction mentioned above in relation to map S19.[163] Despite this, there has still been a significant fall in records of woodland transfers in the South West Upland which may indicate the end of a period of new settlement apparent in the south of the county from the mid thirteenth century. Indeed, Kettle has claimed that most of the evidence for assarting in the later medieval period is from the centre and north of the county.[164]

Map S42: Distribution, 1353-1404.

This map reveals how the records of woodland conveyance for the Northern Plain are limited to Whitchurch and how overall distribution is still most prominent south of the river Severn. The most significant districts are around Bromfield on the Herefordshire border and in a group of parishes around Wistanstow between the South West Upland region and the Clee-Wenlock region.

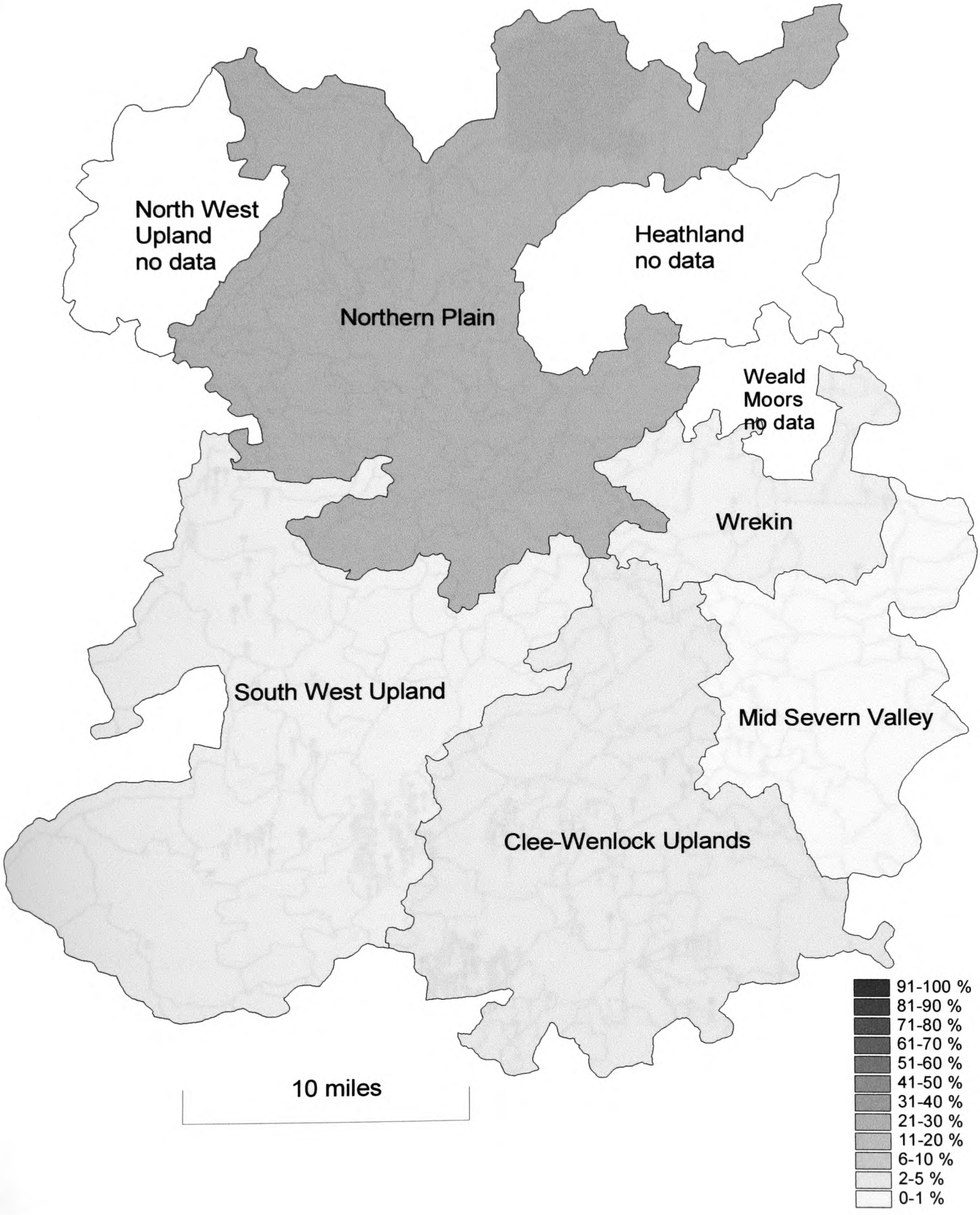
Map S43: Regional percentages, 1405-1456.

This map is interesting because, in percentage terms, it re-establishes the status of the South West Upland as the most significant district in terms of woodland conveyances,

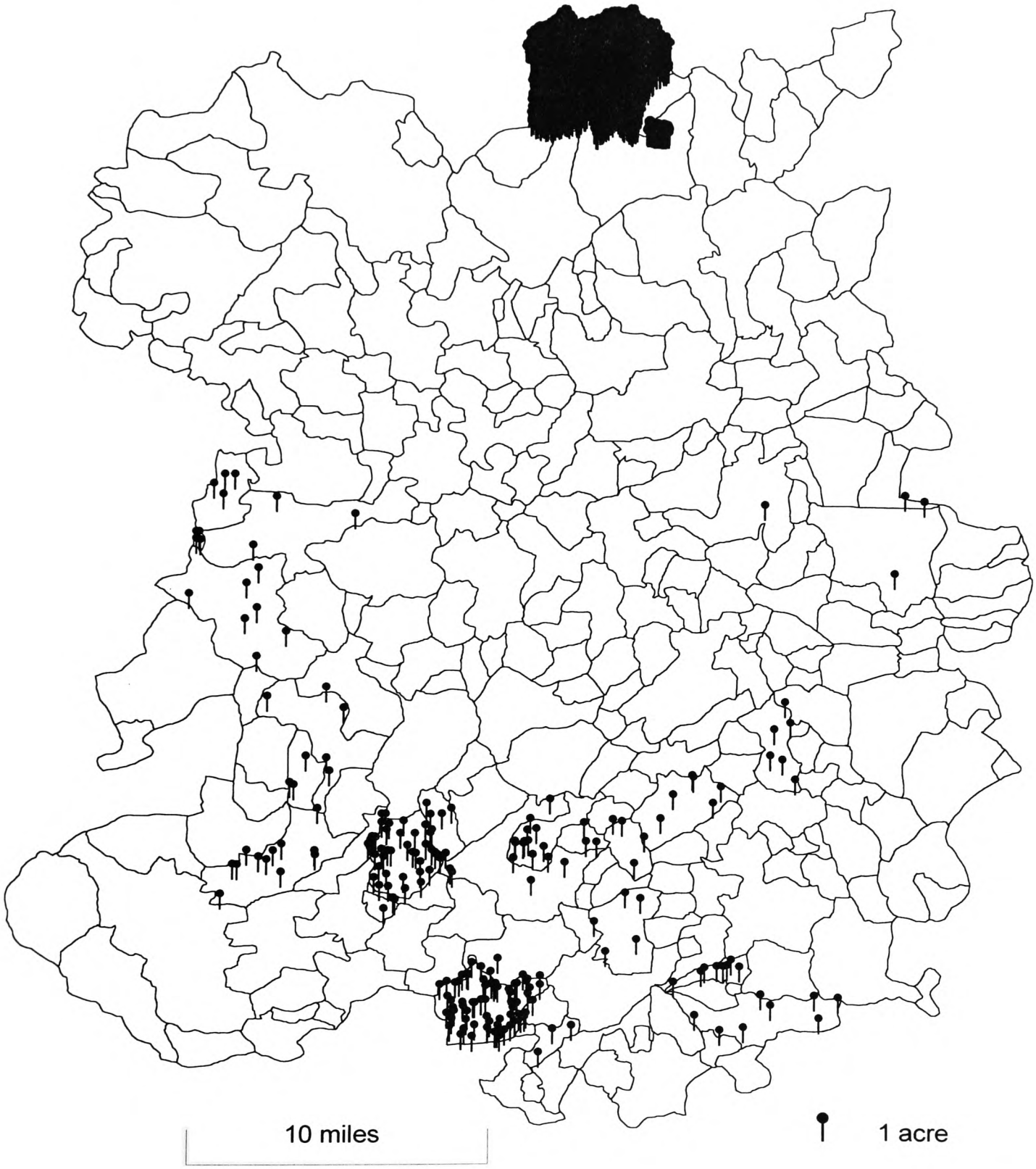
[163] PRO: CP25/1/195/16/5.

[164] Kettle, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-85.

S41: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



S42: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



following a period of inactivity suggested in map S41. It is possible that following the Black Death there was little impetus for new colonization as holdings became vacant in the traditionally well-settled areas. The very high percentage of arable transfers recorded in the Clee-Wenlock region for this period (see map S21) may be indicative of a rise in activity in this region following the upheavals of the fourteenth century. A consequence of this may have been a return to the process of colonization in the southwest, apparent in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, as holdings became filled in the adjacent Clee-Wenlock region. It has already been stated that the assarting movement was prominent in Shropshire at a much later date than many other counties in England. However, it is possible that the significance of transfers in the southwest at this time was more concerned with the exploitation of woodland resources and pastures rather than widescale clearances for arable cultivation.

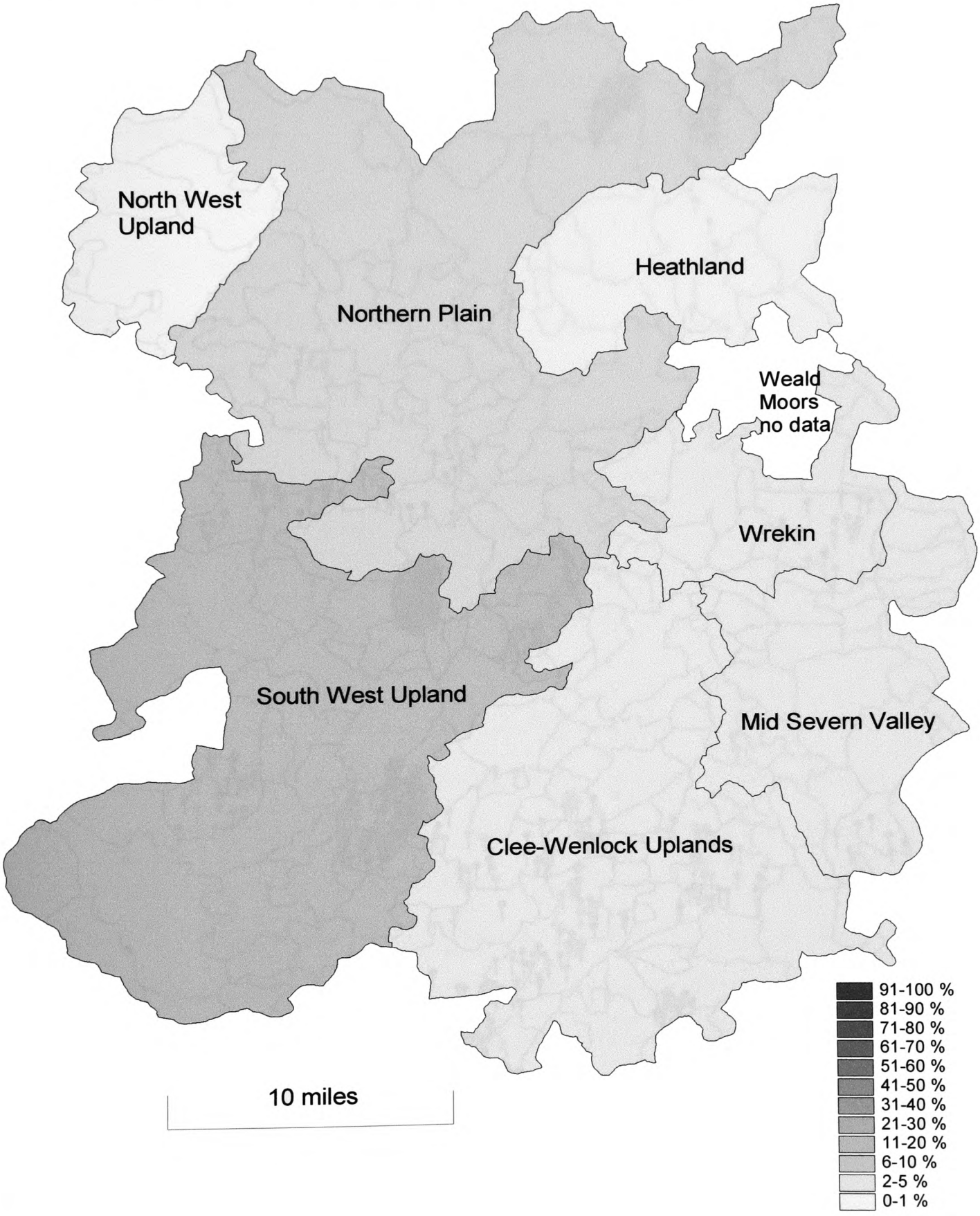
Map S44: Distribution, 1405-1456.

Distribution is at its most extensive in the south of the county in a band running from Bishops Castle, in the west through Acton Scott to Alveley in the southeast. There are also significant clusters at Stapleton on the border between the South West Upland and the Northern Plain, at Ightfield and Adderley in the extreme northeast and at Shifnal in the east of the county near the Staffordshire border.

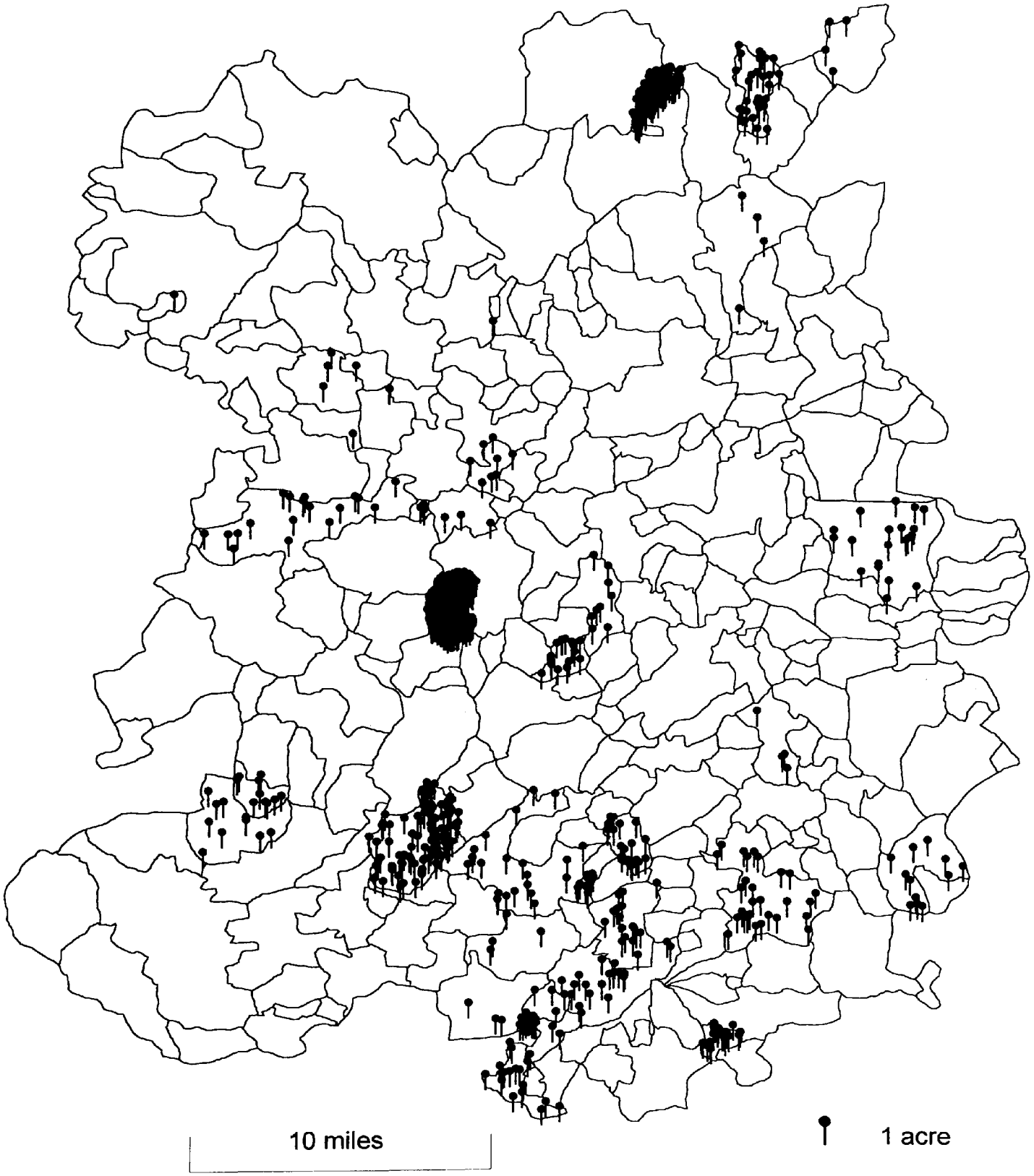
Map S45: Regional percentages, 1457-1508.

There is a very high percentage recorded on the Wrekin. This is due to records in

S43: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



S44: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1456.



two parishes near the edge of the Weald Moors. Once this has been considered, the highest percentages are still in the south of the county although there has definitely been a move northwards in terms of the amount of woodland transfers. This is particularly apparent in map S46 below.

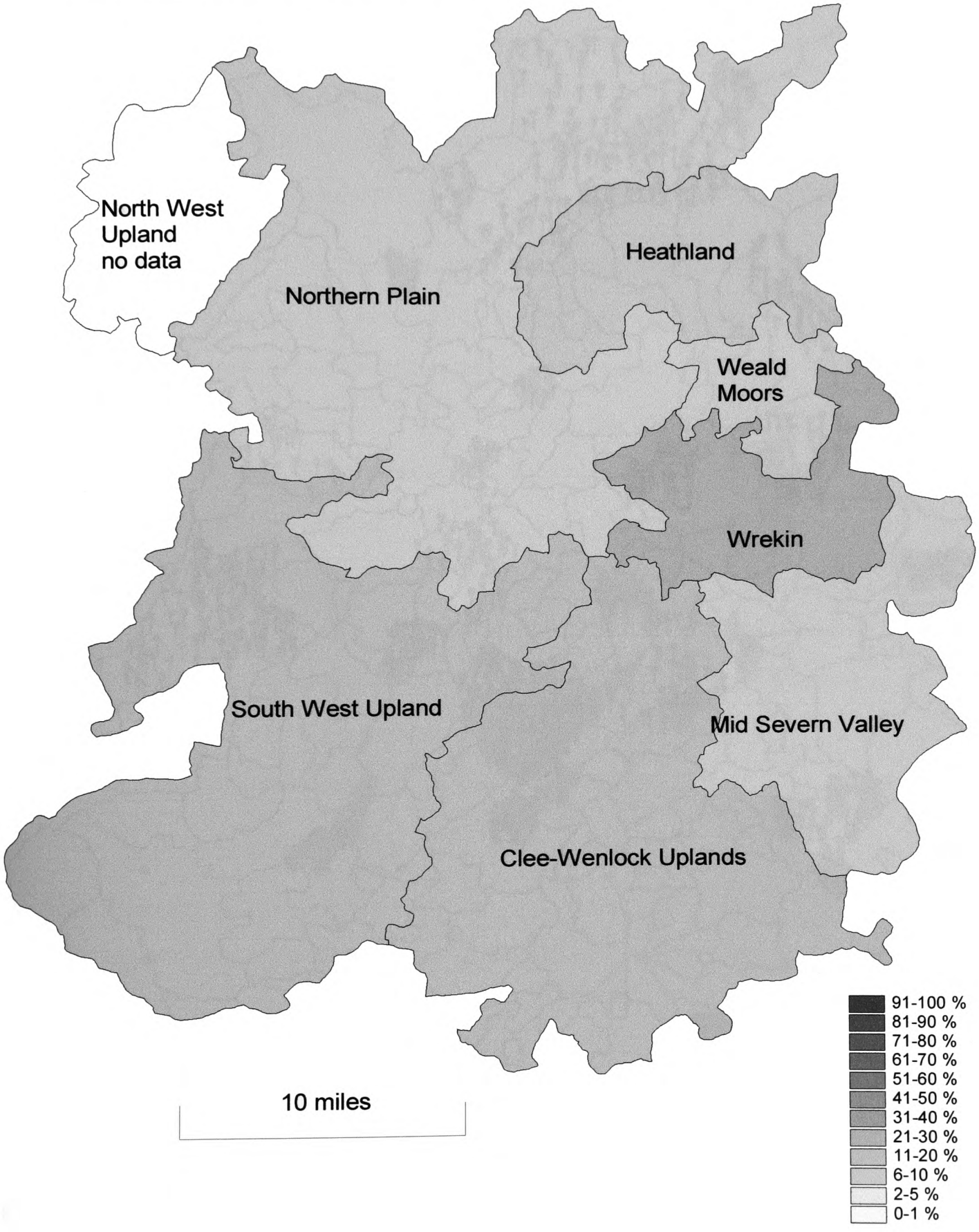
Map S46: Distribution, 1457-1508.

The most significant area to emerge from this map is around the parishes of Munslow, Rushbury, Cardington, Easthope and Church Preen (between the Clee-Wenlock, South West Upland and Northern Plain regions). The northeastern part of the Northern Plain has significant records of woodland transfers in the parishes around Prees and near Chetwynd. In the east of the county there is a cluster around Quatt and there is a significant district on the Montgomeryshire border near Worthen.

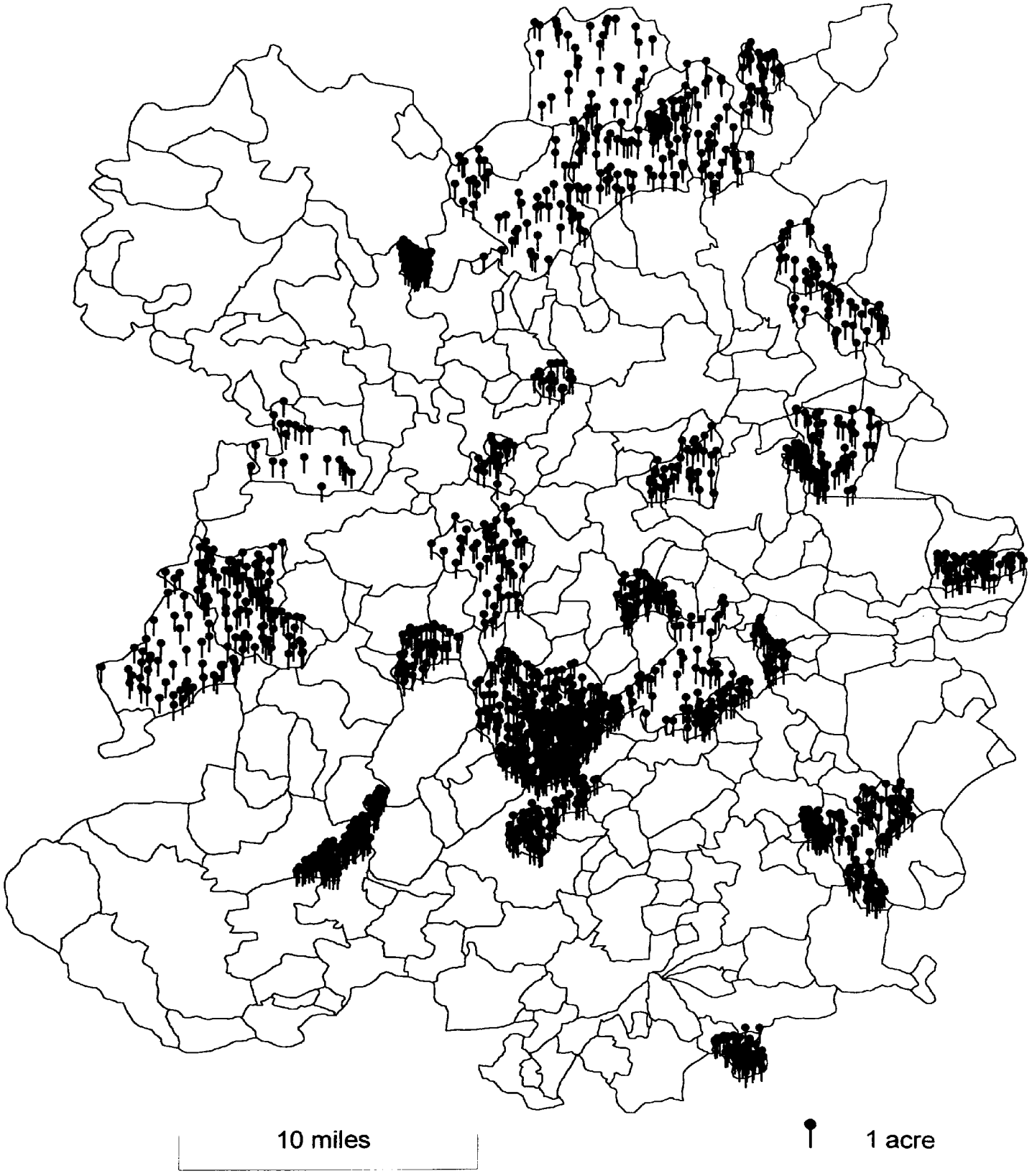
5.7 People and property.

A database of 4756 people recorded in the Shropshire fines has been produced. This is a very similar number to Herefordshire; indeed both counties had a similar amount of fines issued during the medieval period. The data provides records of plaintiffs and deforciants, their spouses and family members, tenants, witnesses and attorneys. As in Herefordshire some of the fines provide information only about the people immediately involved in the transaction, such as the one, issued in Shrewsbury in 1221, between John, the prior of Brecknock and Thomas, son of Roger, relating to the advowson of the church

S45: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.



S46: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1457-1508.



of Cleobury North.[165] Other documents can provide much more information about personal names. For example, a fine issued in Westminster in 1428, involved the transfer of the manors of Chelmarsh and Quatt from John Cressy to John, the bishop of Bath and Wells, Sir Humphrey Stafford, William Halle, John Hod, John Ardern, Peter Stucle, Robert Hyllary and Henry Sherard.[166]

As mentioned previously, messuages are frequently mentioned in the feet of fines. They often appear as part of a transfer of a variety of land types in a rural context. For example, in 1329, Walter de Baskerville obtained two messuages, two carucates of arable, six acres of meadow and 20 acres of wood in Overton and Coreley, along with £10 9/- rent and the advowson of the church of Coreley, from Peter de Overton.[167] When messuages appear on their own, without land, they are usually in an urban setting, such as the one messuages surrendered in Ludlow, also in 1329, by Richard de Corve and Alicia, his wife, to Reginald de Pensay.[168] There are a total of 1749 messuages recorded in the fines for Shropshire, this compares with the 1256 for Herefordshire. In Shropshire there are 46 parishes with ten and over messuages recorded compared to 29 in Herefordshire. There are 182 messuages in Shropshire that have not been identified.

Map S47 shows the distribution of messuages throughout the county. Distribution is fairly widespread but with significant gaps in the extreme northwest and extreme southwest, along with the southern part of the Mid Severn Valley around Worfield.

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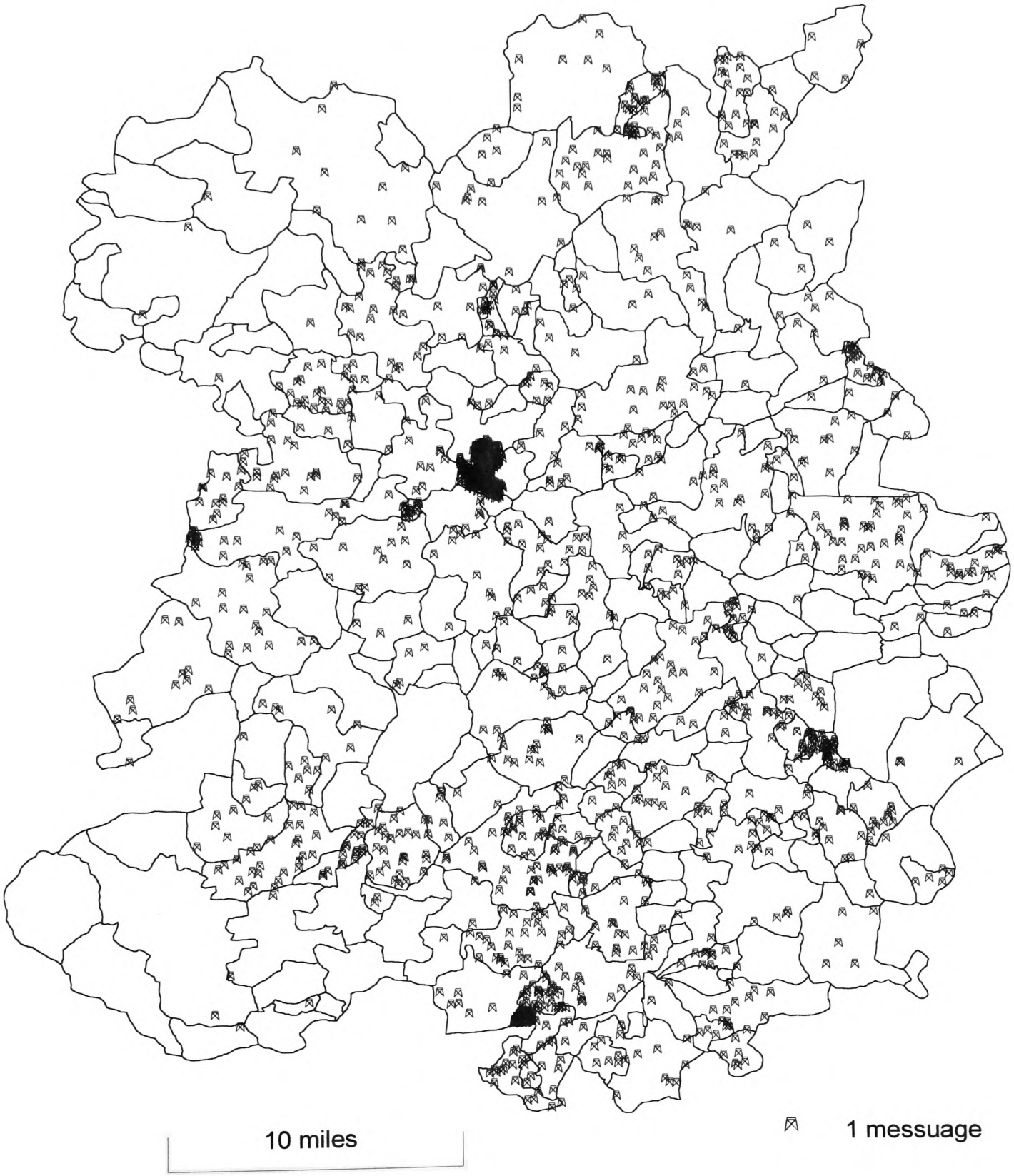
[165] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/31.

[166] PRO: CP25/1/195/22/5.

[167] PRO: CP25/1/194/11/15.

[168] PRO: CP25/1/194/11/16.

S47: Total messuages recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1507.



Concentrations are especially high in the major towns, notably Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Bridgenorth. The following is a list of the towns with the highest concentrations of messuages, 1196-1508.

Table S5: Highest concentrations of messuages, 1196-1508.

Shrewsbury 255	Ludlow 150	Bridgenorth 45	Shifnal 38
Diddlebury 37	Stanton Lacy 27	Wistanstow 26	Lydbury North 25
Much Wenlock 23	Prees 23	Great Ness 20	Edgton 19

This list has been compared to Beresford and Finberg's *Handlist.*[169] Five out of the 12 places recorded above appear as boroughs in the *Handlist:* Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Bridgenorth, Shifnal and Much Wenlock. As in Herefordshire, the remaining places have been examined to discover whether there is any evidence of them being "minimal boroughs" such as those identified by Britnell in his examination of the feet of fines for Essex.[170]

Of the seven places studied, there is just one fine with evidence of landless messuages. This was issued in 1366 and involved the transfer of three messuages in Lydbury North from Roger de Stowe and his wife Margia, along with John de Munede, to

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[169] M. W. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs: A Handlist*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.150-154.

[170] R. H. Britnell, 'Burghal characteristics of market Towns in Medieval England', *Durham University Journal*, 73, (1981), pp. 147-151.

John de Boeley.[171] As in Herefordshire it was decided to search for evidence of "minimal boroughs" at a lower level by examining all the places with ten or more messuages mentioned in the Shropshire feet of fines. There are 30 such places, not including those in table S5 above. The only place with evidence of landless messuages is Newport,[172] which appears in Beresford and Finberg's *Handlist* of medieval boroughs. There are three other places in this dataset whose borough status is acknowledged in the *Handlist*: Ellesmere, Baschurch and Richards Castle (Herefordshire). These leaves 26 places which do not appear on the *Handlist* but have evidence of ten or more messuages in the fine data. However, none of these places display any evidence of being "minimal boroughs" or of the type of suburban development recognized in the parishes around Hereford (see section 4.7 above). There is just one fine mentioning a burgess (compared to seven in Herefordshire). The fine was issued in 1281 and involved the transfer of a third part of a messuage in Shrewsbury, from Richard Gamel, son of Alan Gamel of Shrewsbury, and his wife Cecilia, to Richard Borrey, a burgess of Shrewsbury and his wife, Isabella.[173]

Shops reveal important evidence of urban development. The first shops to be mentioned in the Shropshire fines was in 1276 when Philip son of Stephen obtained a shop and a messuage in Ludlow from Robert Le Ken de Appeley.[174] The last fine to mention shops was in 1487 when the merchant, Hugh Walker de Salop obtained four along with three messuages in Shrewsbury.[175] Map S48 and table S6 show the distribution of shops in

[171] PRO: CP25/1/195/17/6.

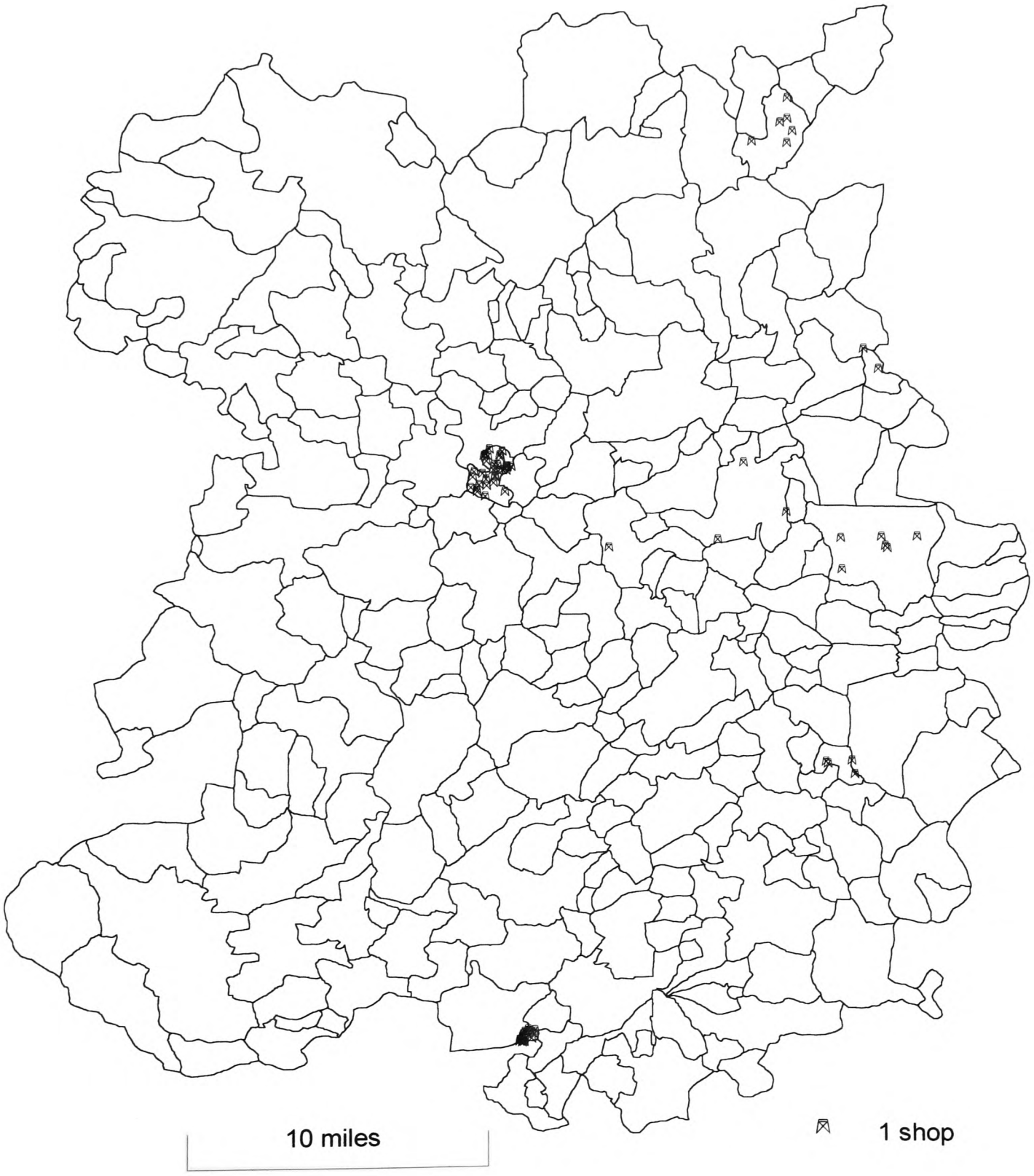
[172] PRO: CP25/1/195/7/91; CP25/1/195/22/10.

[173] PRO: CP25/1/193/5/68.

[174] PRO: CP25/1/193/5/18.

[175] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/1.

S48: Total shops recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1507.



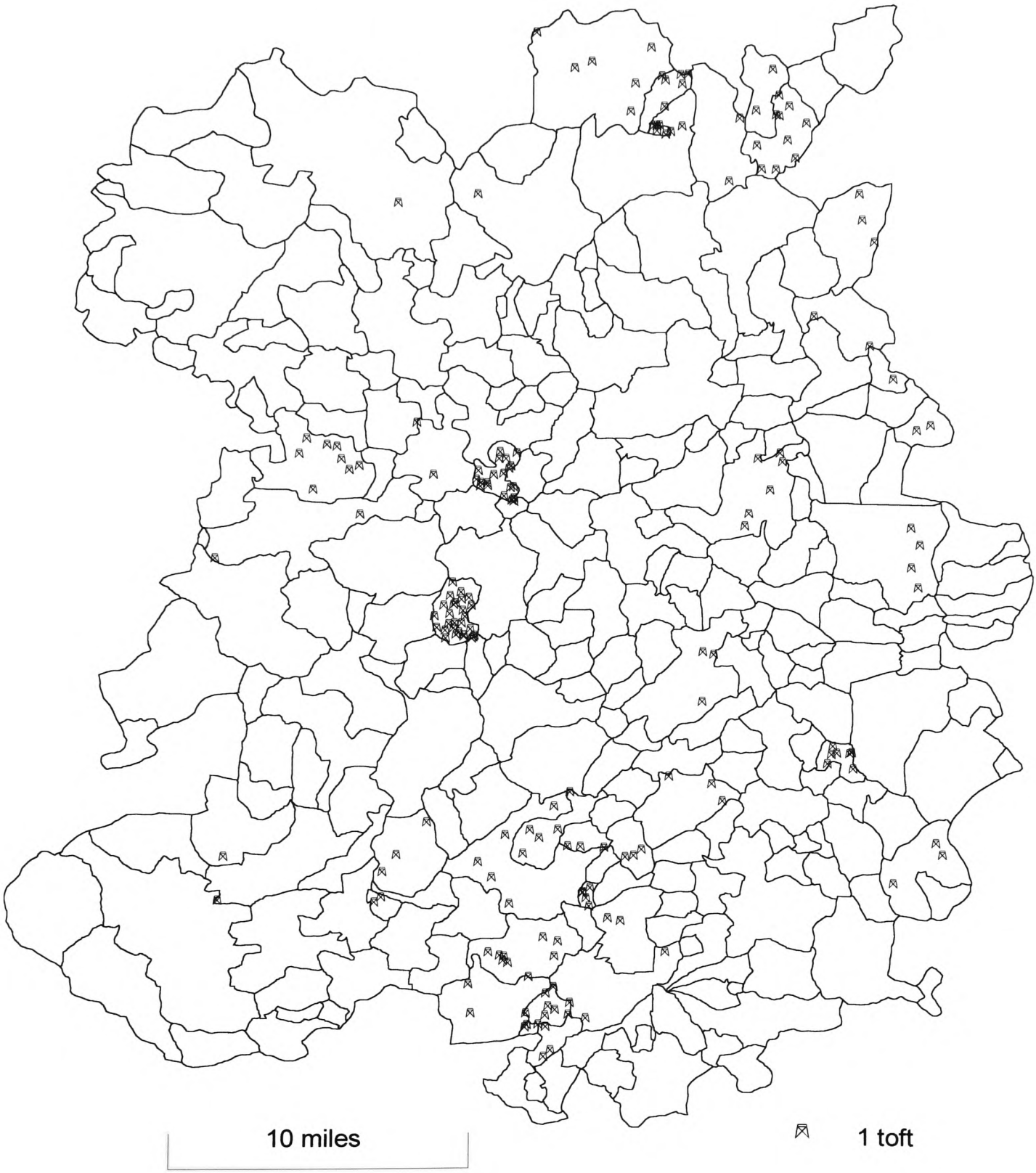
the Shropshire fines. Although there are fewer shops recorded than in Herefordshire (66 compared to 79) the evidence suggests that there were more commercial centres in Shropshire than in Herefordshire. This is probably due to a more regional economy within Shropshire and more difficult communications within the county. There were four shops transferred in the fourteenth century, 48 in the fifteenth century and 14 in the sixteenth century.

Table S6: Shops.

Shrewsbury 32	Ludlow 16	Shifnal 6	Market Drayton 6
Bridgenorth 4	Wellington 3	Newport 2	Wroxeter 1

Map S49 shows the distribution of tofts. There are 188 mentioned in the Shropshire fines, five in the thirteenth century, 35 in the fourteenth century, 138 in the fifteenth century and ten in the sixteenth century (all in 1508). In comparison, the total number of tofts recorded in Herefordshire is 124. The figures indicate a massive increase in the transfer of this type of property in the fifteenth century. The most important regional evidence of the conveyance of tofts appears to be in the Clee-Wenlock region. The northeast is also well represented. Individually, Stapleton, with 28, Shrewsbury, with 20 and Market Drayton, with ten tofts respectively, are the most significant places. The 28 tofts transferred in Stapleton were all recorded in one fine of 1441 (this needs to be

S49: Total tofts recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1507.



considered when viewing the map). The fine involves the surrender of the tofts along with two water mills, three carucates of arable, 20 acres of meadow, three acres of pasture, 514 acres of wood, £14 4/- rent, and the manor of Stapleton. William Adam de Longdon and Richard Adam de Cardington obtained the land and property from John Stapleton de Stapleton.[176]

Map S50 shows the distribution of mills transferred in the Shropshire fines. The first to be mentioned was in 1218, in Gretton, along with the moiety of the vill and part of the vill of Kenley. The property was acquired from Warner de Wililee, by Margia de Chabbenore.[177] The last mill to be mentioned was in the parish of Donington in 1501.[178] There are a total of 95 mills recorded in Shropshire, compared with 57 in Herefordshire. There are 35 mills mentioned in the thirteenth century, 46 in the fourteenth century, ten in the fifteenth century and four in the year 1501. There are noticeable concentrations of mill conveyances along the rivers Severn and Rea and in the Teme Valley. There are especially high concentrations in Ludlow, Wollaston and Shawbury.

There is a variety of other types of property mentioned in the Shropshire fines, including 473 manors, eight lordships, 14 Welsh *cantrefi* and 20 Welsh commotes and 13 castles. In 1331 William de Monte Acuto obtained the castle, vill, manor and honour of Denbigh, the *cantrefi* of Rhos, Rhufoniog and Caemerch and the commote (W. *cwmwd*) of Dinmael (all in Wales).[179] Other property includes 46 gardens, two granges, four fisheries,

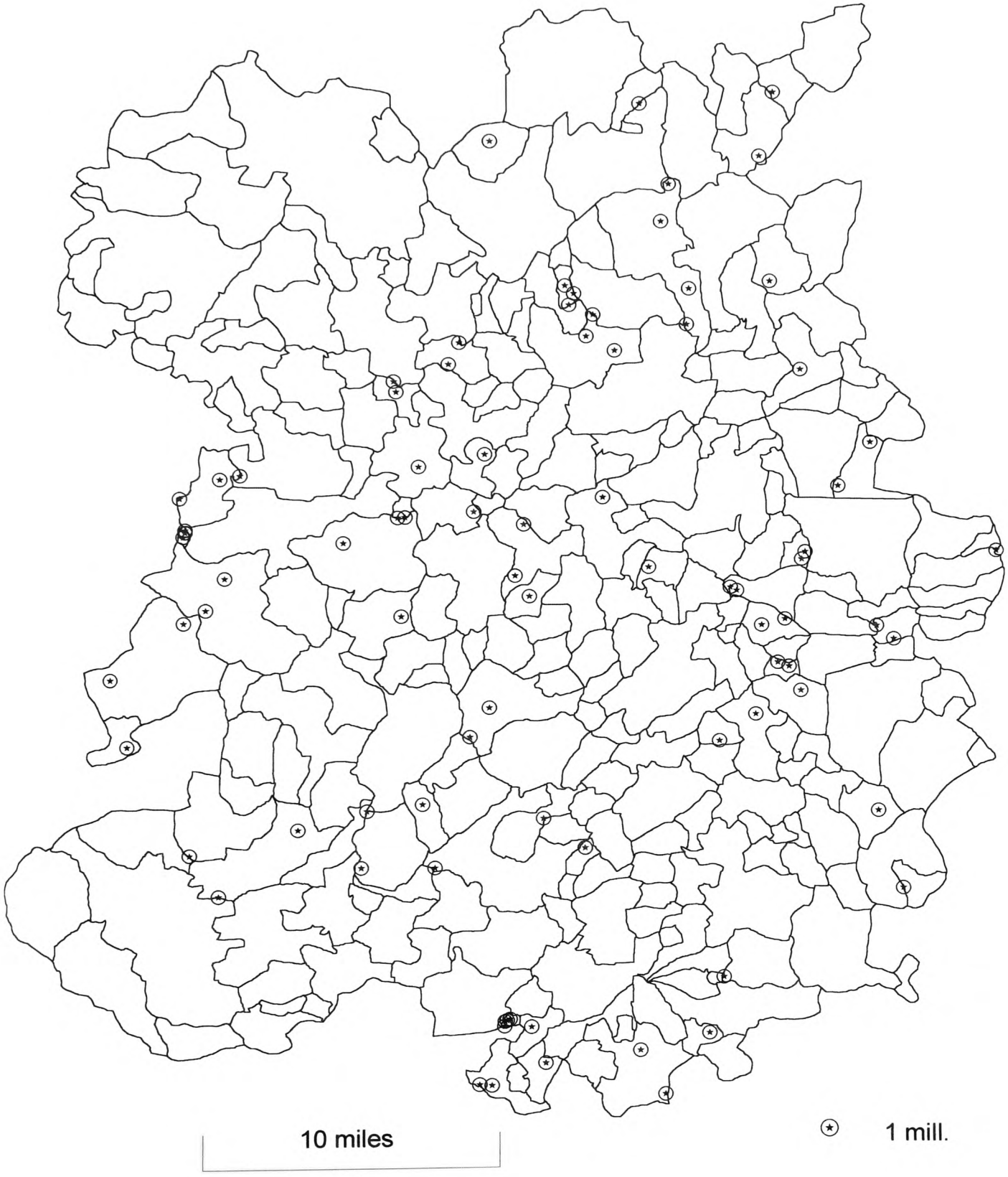
[176] PRO: CP25/1/195/22/26.

[177] PRO: CP25/1/193/3/1.

[178] PRO: CP25/1/195/24/12.

[179] PRO: CP25/1/194/11/44.

S50: Total mills recorded in the feet of fines, 1196-1507.



two dovecots, one cottage, two capital messuages, one furnace, one grove, two hays, 90 loads of corn, one malthouse, one park, 14 vills, two small plots and four weirs.

5.7(i) Welsh people in the Shropshire fines.

The same criteria has been applied to organising the data relating to possible Welsh people in the Shropshire fines as in Herefordshire. People with an obvious Welsh name, such as Llywelyn de Colebatch who, in 1255, surrendered half a virgate of arable in Colebatch (Lydbury North) to Philip son of John de Colebatch, have been allocated a direct Welsh link.[180] People with possible Welsh links such as Adam son of Eynon, who surrendered 11 acres of arable and one acre of meadow in 1272 in Aston, to William Hager, have been grouped separately. The same is true of those people with a connection with Wales through land holding or office rather than "nationality", such as Brian de Abergavenny who, in 1419, along with John Beauchamp, obtained the manor of Bromfield and a messuage in Walton, from John Drake, John Wode and Thomas Hervy.[181] The resulting lists identified 33 people with direct Welsh connections, 25 with probable Welsh connections and 56 with indirect Welsh connections. The list of people with direct connections was used to produce maps S51 and S52, which show the distribution of plaintiffs and deforciants of Welsh origin.

[180] PRO: CP25/1/193/4/77.

[181] PRO: CP25/1/195/21/12.

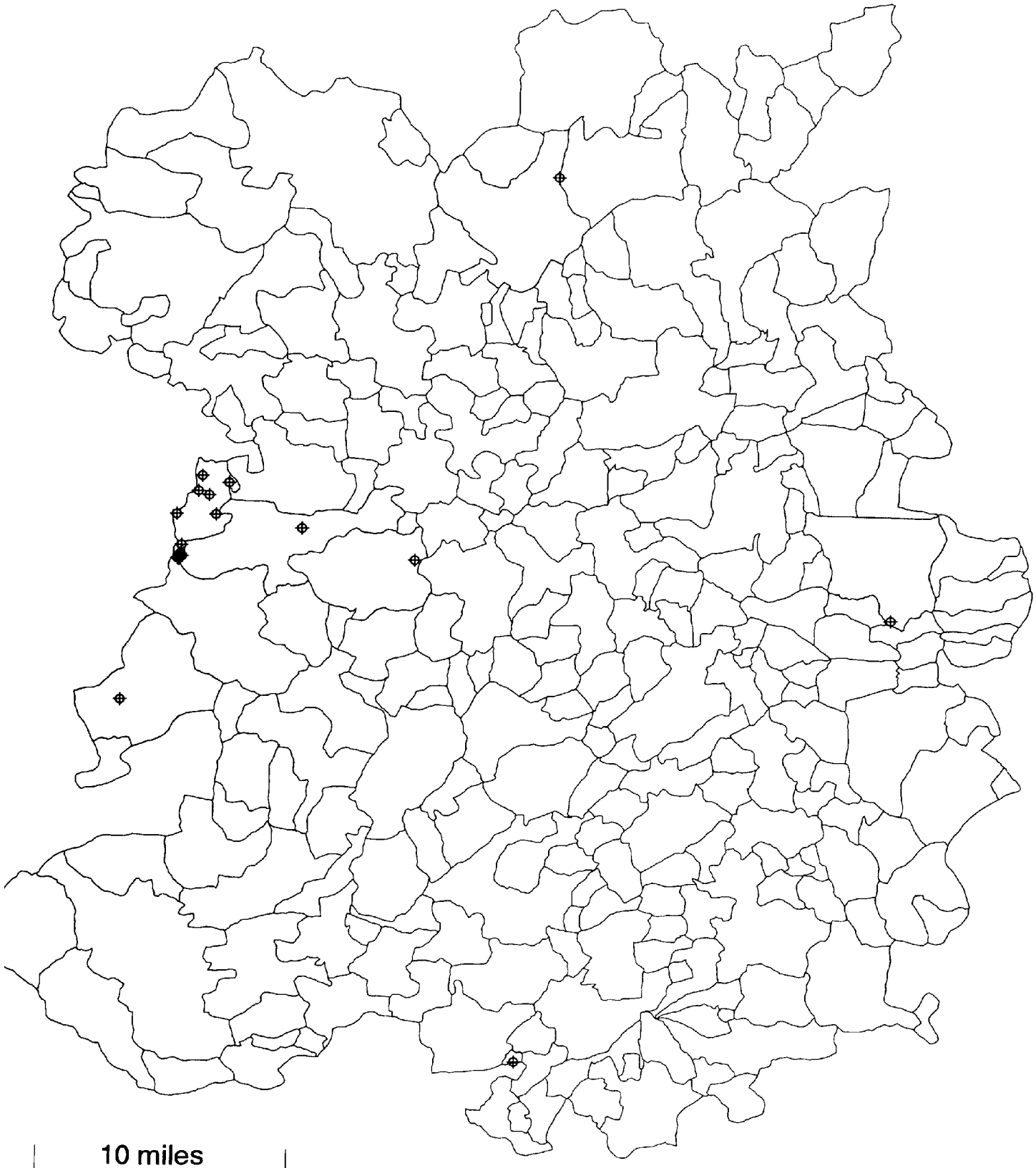
Maps S51 and S52.

There are ten plaintiffs and 21 deforciants of obvious Welsh origin recorded in the whole series of fines. This is a very small percentage of the total number of 4756 people recorded. The percentage is little improved even when people of probable Welsh origin are added to the total. The lack of data has meant that it has not been possible to see any significant trends over time. Most of the conveyances which involved people of Welsh descent acquiring land or property occurred in the parishes on the border with Montgomeryshire, especially Wollaston and Westbury. Most of those involved in the surrender of land or property were also from these parishes although overall there is more widespread distribution of deforciants. The lack of data relating to such people in the Shropshire fines is similar to the situation in Herefordshire. The most likely reason seems to be that the Welsh generally maintained their own forms of conveyance. This may help explain the general lack of fines issued relating to the extreme northwest and extreme southwest of the county.

5.8 Conclusion.

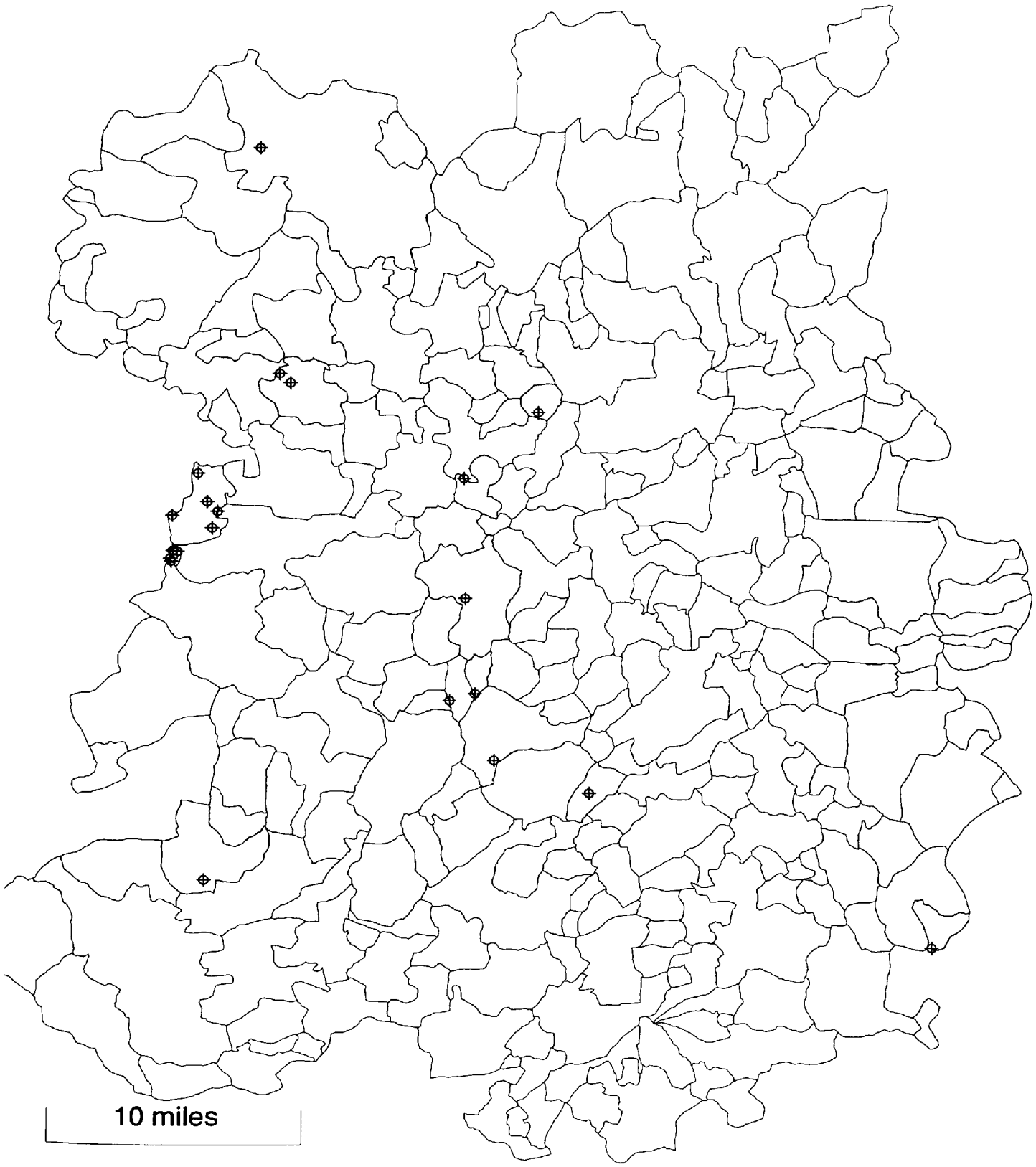
Feet of fines are a valuable source for the study of medieval Shropshire. They provide a greatly increased dataset of place-names and personal names. The data has enabled a much more countywide study of land-use and settlement for a large part of the Middle Ages. They suggest that Shropshire had a much more mixed agricultural economy

S51: Plaintiffs of Welsh origin, 1196-1508.



⌖ 1 transfer of land or property.

S52: Deforciants of Welsh origin, 1196-1508.



⌖ 1 transfer of land or property.

than neighbouring Herefordshire, primarily due to the complex physical make-up of the county which supported a variety of distinct regions. Overall the most activity is apparent south of the River Severn. Despite the similar number of fines issued for Shropshire as for Herefordshire in the medieval period there is a very different pattern of land use change in the two counties. There is no main central region dominating the agriculture of Shropshire as the Central Plain does in Herefordshire. Rather there are three large regions, of similar size, covering much of the centre and west of the county, and a series of smaller regions, mainly on the eastern border. The complex geography of Shropshire means that all the regions have a variety of sub-districts which have tended to promote mixed farming methods from the earliest times.

The data from the feet of fines has indicated that the Clee-Wenlock region was the most significant in terms of activity and of arable production. This is in keeping with what is already known about this district in the medieval period with the low-lying parts of this area, such as Corve Dale, producing some of the best conditions for arable farming in the county and attracting major settlement.

There are a much higher percentage of woodland conveyances recorded for Shropshire than for Herefordshire. The highest percentages occur in the South West Upland region. It appears that woodland clearances continued in parts of this region well beyond the thirteenth century. There is evidence to suggest that new settlement occurred in this region as a result of a rise in population in the adjacent Clee-Wenlock district and,

perhaps, due to population pressures in other counties. There are similarities here with Herefordshire where the Western Border region was the most significant area of new settlement throughout much of the period covered by the medieval fines.

The relatively low percentage of transfers of meadow and pasture in Shropshire is in keeping with the evidence from other sources such as *Inquisitions post mortem*. Many of the records of transfers of these land types occur in the northwest of the county and on the Weald Moors. These districts were to become very important dairying and livestock-fattening areas in the post medieval period and the evidence suggests the emergence of this process in the later Middle Ages.

Although it seems Shropshire was less affected by the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century than many other counties, there is a direct correlation between the number of fines issued and the worst years of the period of bad harvests and famine. There is a notable rise in woodland transfers during these years and an interesting link between the parishes shown as experiencing difficulties in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* and those with the highest levels of activity in the feet of fines. It seems that Shropshire was less dependent on arable farming than some counties and so was less affected, in direct terms, by the failure of harvests. However, it is likely that Shropshire was affected by population rise in certain districts and by problems in other counties, leading to an important increase in settlement in the fourteenth century.

There is even less evidence for "minimal boroughs" in Shropshire than in

Herefordshire. This suggests that the economy of the counties in England's mid west was very different to that of the southeastern counties like Essex. There are more commercial centres apparent in the Shropshire evidence than for Herefordshire. This is likely to be due to a more localized economy in Shropshire because of its mixed geography, many regions and difficult communications.

As in Herefordshire records of Welsh people in fines are very limited. Most of the data is from the Montgomeryshire border. It is likely that most of the Welsh people of Shropshire were based in the upland districts of the extreme northwest and southwest and were engaged in sheep husbandry. It is probable that they generally used their own methods of conveyance and were involved in a form of agriculture that had hardly changed in many centuries.

Chapter 6

Gloucestershire in the Feet of Fines

This chapter examines the data from the medieval feet of fines for Gloucestershire. There are a total of 2476 documents for the period 1199-1508 (significantly more than for Shropshire and Herefordshire). The first document, issued in Gloucester in the first year of the reign of John, involved the transfer of a virgate of arable in Hasfield from Richard Panceuolt to Simon de Hasfield.[1] The last fine was issued in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Henry VII. It was concerned with the conveyance of the moiety of a messuage, 30 acres of arable, six acres of meadow, 44 acres of pasture and two acres of wood in Ham, Pedington and Stone, from Thomas Rycardes to Robert Rycardes.[2] The data will be used to examine themes of landscape change and settlement patterns in the county. The chapter commences with a regional and historical survey, based on a variety of other sources. It will then show how fines can be used to augment these sources and provide a detailed long-term data set for the study of medieval Gloucestershire. The chapter includes a series of graphs, tables and maps, generated from the fine data, which display changes over time and highlight the effects of historical events on the landscape.

[1] PRO: CP25/1/73/1/1.

[2] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/77.

6.1 Regional Survey (see maps G1, G2 and G3).

Finberg notes "Gloucestershire is a purely artificial unit, first mentioned under that name in 1016."[3] He explains that originally three royal centres dominated the administrative landscape of the area: Gloucester, Winchcombe and Cirencester. He says that Gloucester was associated with the Vale and an annexed area of some 85,000 acres west of the Severn, whereas Wichcombe was the administrative centre for the northern Cotswolds as was Cirencester for the south of this region, a district which came to be known as the Seven Hundreds of Cirencester. He says that around the year 1016, during the reign of Cnut, the county of Gloucestershire was formed with the loss of the autonomy of Wichcombeshire and its linking to the Seven Hundreds and the area west of the Severn.[4] The boundaries remained fluid until fairly recent times, a situation which has had some implications for the mapping of the data in fines. Finberg says that Cutsdean, in the northern Cotswolds, was in Worcestershire until 1931 although there are three fines in the Gloucestershire series associated with this parish. For example, in 1220 Robert de Cutsdean obtained half a hide of arable from Peter de Cutsdean.[5] In 1315 Thomas de Dowdswell obtained a messuage, a mill a carucate and ten virgates of arable, 15 acres of meadow and 50 acres of wood there from John de la Hoese, the prior of the church of Hampton Meysey.[6] On the other hand, some places were in Gloucestershire in medieval times but were later transferred to other counties. One notable example is Shenington for which there are 19 fines in the medieval period. The parish was transferred to Oxfordshire in 1844.

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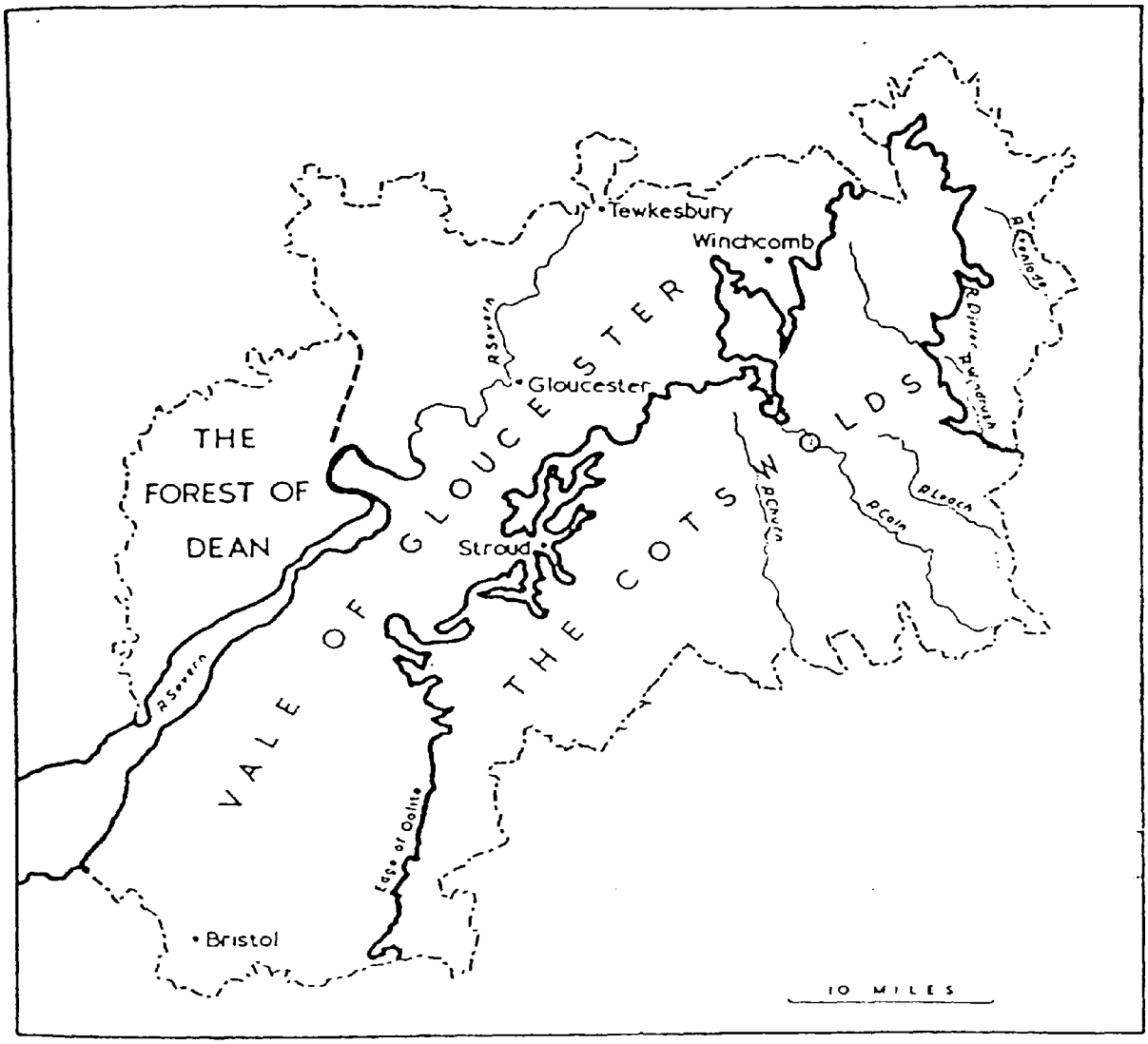
[3] H. P. R. Finberg, *The Gloucestershire Landscape*, (London, 1975), p. 21.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[5] PRO: CP25/1/73/4/17.

[6] PRO: CP25/1/76/47/132.

G1: Gloucestershire regions (after Darby.)



It is possible to divide Gloucestershire into three distinctive physical regions, the Cotswolds, the Vale of Gloucester, the Forest of Dean.[7] Finberg has stated that Gloucestershire is very much "divided into three parts."[8] He goes as far as to suggest that were it not for modern communications helping to link the regions more closely then it would be difficult to justify them as one administrative area.[9] From a vantage point at Haresfield Beacon, west of Stroud, Finberg has described some of the variety of landscape that can be seen. He says to the west one can see the "wooded cliffs of Old Red Sandstone that form the eastern edge of the Forest of Dean" an area of woodland which today is estimated at about 23,000 acres.[10] Between Dean and the Beacon lies the Vale of Berkeley which Finberg describes as "that rich and fruitful vale, which with its dairy-farms and orchards, used to wring cries of admiration from travellers like Corbett."[11] From another vantage point, west of the Severn, at Pleasant Stile Finberg describes the Cotswolds scarp. He says that the edge runs through much of eastern Gloucestershire and forms a limestone plateau which dominates the skyline and reaches an altitude of just under 11,000 feet at its highest point on Cleeve Common. The edge runs for 62 miles between Stinchcombe Hill and Dover's Hill near Chipping Campden.[12] Finberg concludes by stating that on a clear day, the view from Haresfield provides "a bird's-eye view of forest, vale, and wold, the three traditional divisions of the Gloucestershire landscape."[13]

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[7] H. C. Darby, 'Gloucestershire', *The Domesday Geography of Midland England,* ed. H. C. Darby and I. B. Terrett, (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1971), p. 50.

[8] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

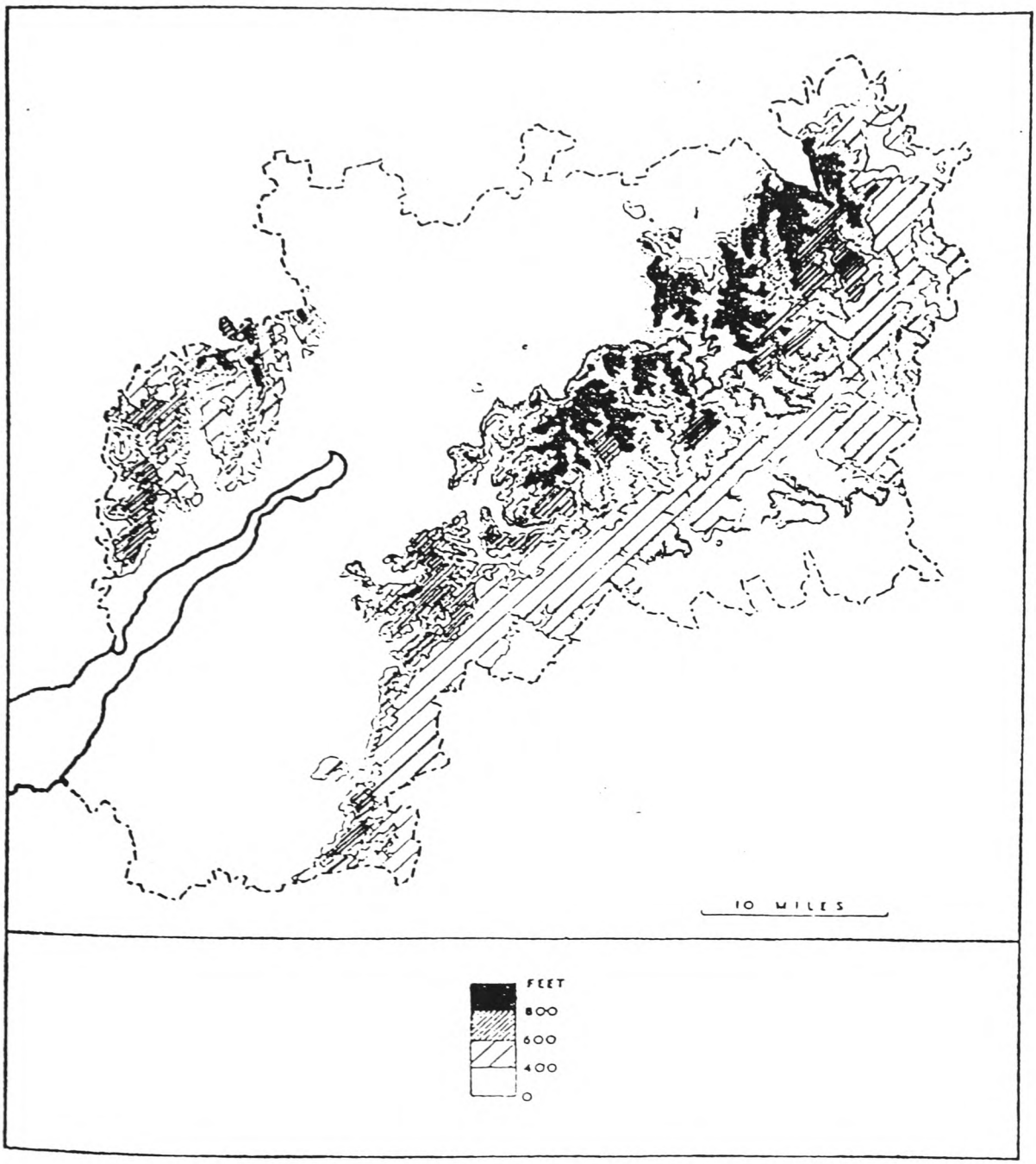
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

G2: Gloucestershire relief (after Darby.)



6.1(i) The Cotswolds.

The area of the Cotswolds includes much of the eastern section of Gloucestershire. Hooke has noted that the name 'Cotswold' was not recorded before the twelfth century although she believes it to be "undoubtedly a name of Anglo-Saxon origin . . . apparently referring to an area of high pastureland which was once relatively wooded."[14] She notes that the slope of the scarp is still well wooded today along with the valleys above Winchcomb. She claims that today the term Cotswolds conjures an "image of the open sheep country which characterized much of this region until the present century, one which has been marked by increased agricultural activity."[15]

Finberg has noted how the Cotswold Hills are formed of a very distinctive limestone known as oolite. Darby has described how they comprise a steep escarpment in the west of the region with land generally at an altitude of 600-800 feet above sea level, rising, in places, to as high as 1000 feet above.[16] The lower and older Inferior Oolite of this western district rises upwards to form the Cotswold Scarp which comprises all of the wold's highest points.[17] This inclined plateau progressively falls to below 300 feet as a sequence of river valleys meet the Thames in the southeast. In the east, Finberg notes, the Inferior Oolite falls underneath the newer Great Oolite which then extends into Oxfordshire.[18] Darby has recognized the foremost valleys as being the Churn, Coln, Leach, Windrush, Dikler and the

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[14] D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon England,* (Leicester, 1998), pp. 6-9.

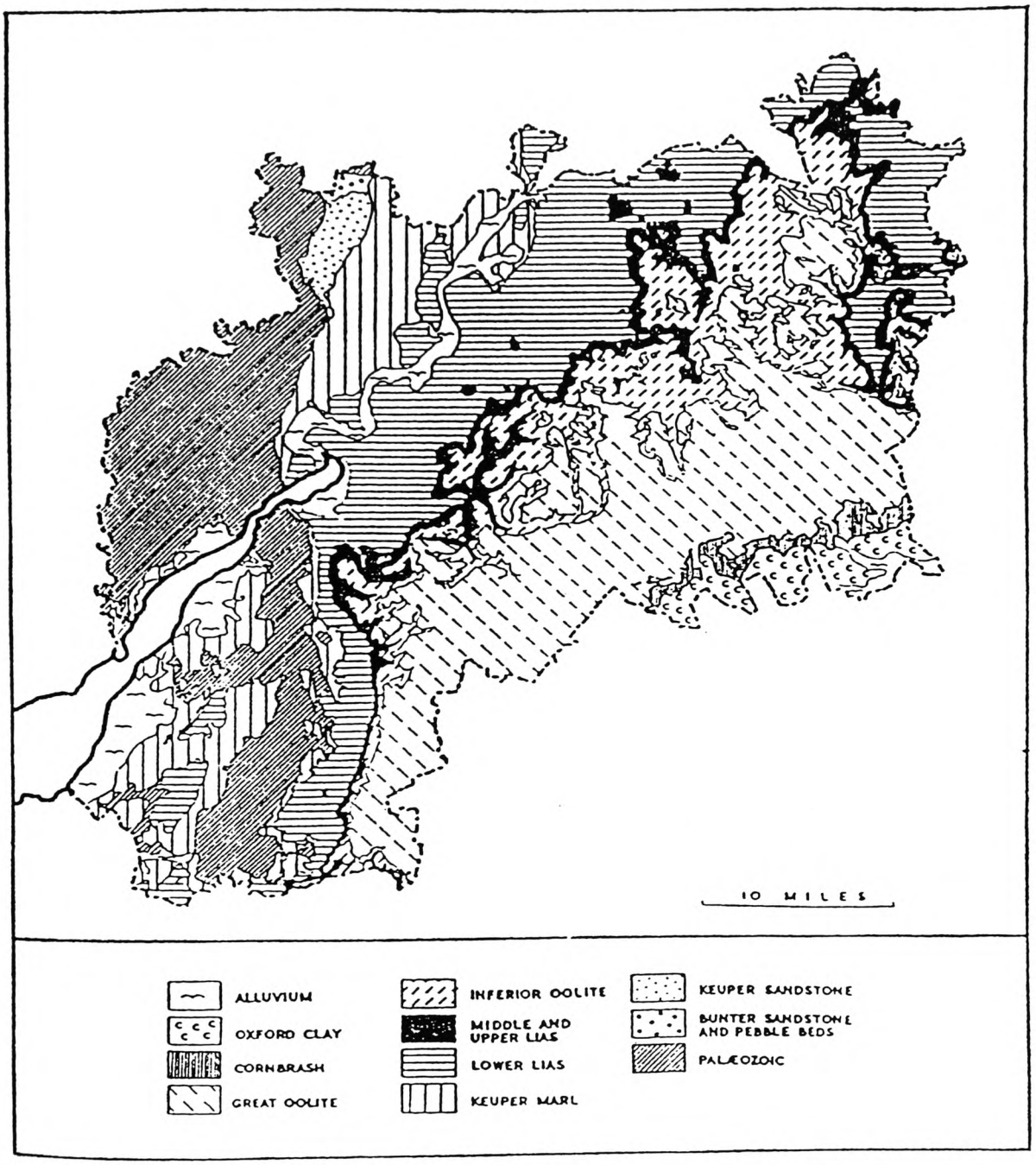
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[16] Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

[17] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

G3: Gloucestershire geology (after Darby.)



Evenlode.[19] Overall, the Oolitic Limestone of the region produces soils that are generally light and thin on the plateau although there are some heavier soils on the formations of Forest Marble and Cornbrash in the southeast.[20]

Darby has suggested that in spite of the "unenclosed character" of the Cotswold plateau, there was extensive agricultural activity all through the area in the eleventh century. He has identified numerous villages in the river valleys, generally with small parcels of meadow and a mill. He claims that the region was thinly wooded in the eleventh century except for a spread out belt in the north, running from Winchcomb via Minchinhampton to Chipping Sodbury.[21] Dyer has also recognized that there were "very large areas under cultivation" in the Cotswolds from the pre-Conquest period through to the later Middle Ages.[22]

As the Middle Ages progressed the Cotswolds became a very important sheep farming region; fleeces were bought by wool merchants for export and a few local fulling mills were established. Hooke has noted that even in the eleventh century the wool trade was flourishing, citing the establishment of Stow-on-the-Wold as a trading centre by the Abbot of Evesham as an example. She also shows how the production of salt was an important industry in the area.[23] By the fourteenth century there were a number of affluent graziers in the region.[24]

Finberg has suggested that despite the fact that the Cotswolds is today an important region of mixed agriculture, in the early modern period a great distinction

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[19] Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.

[22] C. Dyer, 'Sheepcotes: Evidence for Medieval Sheepfarming', *Medieval Archaeology*, Vol. 39, (1995), p. 160.

[23] Hooke, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[24] P. Franklin, *The Taxpayers of Medieval Gloucestershire*, (Stroud, 1993), p. 1.

could be seen between the lush pastures of the Vale, whose dairies produced "the famous cheeses" - Double and Single Gloucester - and the harsher stonier environment of the Cotswolds.[25]

6.1(ii) The Vale of Gloucester.

The Vale consists of land, more or less completely under 400 feet, which stretches out beneath the Cotswold escarpment. The district includes the floodplain of the River Severn and today is a landscape of water meadow and orchards. Finberg says that as a physical region it is represented by the distance between the Cotswold Edge in the east and the sandstone cliffs of Dean in the west. He says that the distance between these two features varies from between six and 13 miles.[26] Darby has stated that the Lower Lias clays and Keuper Marl, typical of the region are heavy and deep but notes some local distinctions such as the areas of loams and sand that, along with some Palaeozoic rocks in the south, afford variety to the soil and surface.[27] Finberg has pointed out the important part the River Severn plays in providing alluvial deposits for the parishes on its banks. It seems that the river particularly favoured parishes on the eastern side, especially the district around Berkeley and Slimbridge. He notes how originally much of the region was heavily wooded and comprised marshy ground that was difficult to gain access to. He contrasts this district of the Vale proper with the area to the northwest around Newent where there is a more

[25] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[26] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[27] Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

"undulating landscape of blood-red soil and emerald green pastures" formed on Triassic marls and sandstones.[28]

The even distribution of Domesday place-names in the region suggests a reasonably uniform utilization of agriculture. The overall density of plough-teams and population suggests that the Vale was reasonably well populated in the eleventh century and was quite similar, in this respect, to the Cotswolds. The amount of meadow noted in each village in Domesday suggests a figure of between ten and 20 acres. This is a relatively small figure, but is comparable with vills in the Cotswolds. Darby has suggested that the "close network of streams" in the Vale would have produced a fair amount of meadow. He noted that there were fewer mills in the Vale than in the Cotswolds in the eleventh century.[29] It has been suggested that originally the region was covered in oak woodland. This had been mostly cleared by the eleventh century apart from some scattered areas around Thornbury in the south, to the west of Stroud in the middle and around Tewkesbury in the north. Like the Cotswolds, the region as a whole was sparsely wooded at the time of the Domesday survey.[30]

Franklin has suggested that the broad representation of agriculture in the Vale in the Middle Ages is a fairly recognizable one of open fields with family holdings, principally in the shape of strips of arable and occasionally with other parcels reclaimed from woodland and marsh.[31] He states that the major crops of the region

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[28] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

[29] Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

[31] Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

were wheat, barley, oats, beans and peas and notices some diversification in the form of small flocks of sheep, orchards and fisheries.[32]

6.1(iii) The Forest of Dean.

This is an upland region of ridges and deep valleys, described by Finberg as an "upland trough."[33] He says the Old Red Sandstone cliffs that rise up from the banks of the Wye and Severn form the rim of the trough. He describes the three high ridges that dissect the surface of the region so dramatically so that it "would be hard to find a level area of more than two hundred acres."[34] The land is usually above 400 feet and rises to an altitude of 800 feet in certain areas. The relief is normally too precipitous for successful arable farming. Carboniferous and older rocks establish a variety of soils which vary considerably from coarse sands to clays. They have a propensity to be unproductive and thin. The region is not well suited for arable cultivation and, as Franklin has stated, in medieval times "these natural conditions were emphasized by its forest status".[35] The primary wood in the Forest has always been oak. Finberg has noted the deposits of iron ore, contained in the upper beds of Mountain Limestone, which was mined from very early times, along with coal, which is present in the layers of Millstone Grit.[36]

Finberg has described the alluvial soil which is present on either side of the banks of the River Severn. In the Dean region this forms a "thin belt" beneath the eastern edge of the forest. He notes the tempestuous nature of the river claiming,

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[33] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[35] Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[36] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 24. See also C. Hart, *Archaeology in Dean,* (Gloucester, 1967).

"when the spring tides thunder up the estuary, it is the most awe-inspiring of English rivers."[37] He says that in geological terms it is a mature river but "its conduct is wayward in the extreme. It frequently shifts its channel, favouring now one bank, now the other, with deposits of rich alluvium."[38] He cites a fascinating example of how the nature of this river could directly affect the agrarian economies of the communities living on either side of it. He says that in 1234 the people of Awre, on the western side of the river, lost almost all of their valuable acres to Slimbridge on the eastern side. The people of Awre went to law in an attempt to recover this valuable commodity. They lost their case because the jury stated that the land had originally belonged to Slimbridge and was but a temporary grant, made by the river, to Awre.[39]

The Domesday evidence of plough-team and population densities in the Forest of Dean region reveals figures around a quarter the densities of the rest of the county. The figures for Dean are restricted largely to those villages on the margins of the area. The interior of the region stands out as "an empty tract" in the Domesday survey.[40] Hilton has described how the parish of St. Briavels, on the banks of the River Wye close to the Welsh border, was the administrative centre of the region.[41] Franklin has characterized the Forest of Dean in the later Middle Ages as an area that developed independently of the rest of Gloucestershire with a distinctive economy based on the production of timber, wood, iron and venison.[42]

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[40] Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[41] R. H. Hilton, *A Medieval Society: The West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century*, (London, 1966), p. 15.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Hilton has considered the iron and coal industries of Dean in the thirteenth century. He estimated that there were about 60 iron forges in the region in 1282 and suggests that they produced between one fifth and one sixth of the country's annual output of iron.[43] He says that the mining of the ore took place primarily on the western side of the Forest "where the biggest outcrop of carboniferous limestone was situated."[44] He also mentions the smaller outcrop in the east between Mitcheldean and the Blackpool brook. The main fuel used in the bloomeries was charcoal and Hilton has estimated that there were 900 charcoal burners hearths in just four of the king's demesne woods in 1282, claiming that the overall number for the whole forest "must have been considerable."[45] He says that this resulted in "a progressive destruction of the wooded cover, which the king attempted to limit by banning charcoal hearths."[46]

6.2 Settlement in Gloucestershire.

Finberg has stated that the first cereal cultivators and farmers to settle within the area now called Gloucestershire found an ideal environment for their style of agriculture high on the wolds around 3000 B.C. He claims that earlier settlement, by hunter-gatherers, would probably have been more apparent in the then still heavily wooded Vale.[47] Hilton explains that the areas of settlement were influenced at this time by the primitive nature of the settlers' agricultural implements meaning that the shallow soils and natural drainage of the upland districts were more favourable than

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[43] Hilton, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 216.

[47] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

the heavy soils of the Vale.[48] There were further waves of settlement in the Bronze Age and Iron Age with the focus apparently remaining on the Cotswolds and, to a certain degree, the Forest of Dean.[49] By the first century A.D. the Dobunni, a strong Belgic tribe, controlled the northern Cotswolds, mainly practicing sheep farming but also growing some corn.[50] Hilton also recognizes the importance of the Cotswold plateau in terms of the early settlement of the West Midlands region.[51] Shortly after the rise of the Dobunni in this region, the Romans established forts at Kingsholm and at Gloucester itself. They developed a network of roads, towns and forts throughout the region and began to exploit the rich natural resources of the Forest of Dean.[52] Finberg sees the coming of the Romans as heralding a change in the agricultural processes in Gloucestershire. He believes that their improved agricultural techniques, notably the use of the heavy plough, allowed the cultivation of the stiffest soils. It appears that the Romans began to settle "down in the Vale" as well as on the "more favoured uplands."[53]

Following the departure of the Roman legions, a Romano-British society flourished in Gloucestershire until the Anglo-Saxons overturned its rule by the later sixth century. Following a series of struggles by rival Anglo-Saxon dynasties the Christian kingdom of the Hwicce emerged as the dominant force in the area. They ruled over the surviving British population with whom they shared a mutual Christian belief system.[54]

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[48] Hilton, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[49] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-38.

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

[51] Hilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

[52] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-57.

River valleys played an important role in settlement patterns and it appears that the upper Thames Valley in southeast Gloucestershire and the Severn Valley around Gloucester and Tewkesbury were settled from the earliest times. Certainly by the time of the Domesday survey these areas contrast with the more lightly settled area west of the Severn, both in terms of population and plough-teams.[55] Dyer has recognized the areas of Gloucestershire which experienced significant growth, in terms of settlement and population, as being to the north of Bristol, the north eastern edge of the Cotswolds and particularly in the Vale of Gloucester (together with the district to the west of the Severn).[56]

It seems that despite earlier clearances there were still extensive areas of woodland in Gloucestershire in the early Anglo-Saxon period. Finberg has stated that more extensive clearances occurred during the period leading up to the Norman Conquest.[57] There has been less evidence for assarting in post-Conquest Gloucestershire than in Shropshire for example. Hilton has claimed that due to the deliberate preservation of woodland by the Crown and wealthy magnates, "a considerable part of the West Midland region in the thirteenth century was wood or forest."[58] However, Finberg has noted examples of twelfth century assarts in the Forest of Dean, at Northwood, near Westbury-on-Severn and between Clearwell and Redbrook in the Wye Valley, claiming that they occurred in spite of attempts made by the Crown to reserve areas of woodland for hunting.[59] He has shown how assarting gained momentum in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, primarily due to licenses

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[55] C. Dyer, 'New Settlement: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. II, *1042-1350*, ed. H. E. Hallam, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 224.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 226.

[57] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[58] Hilton, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[59] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

from the Crown such as the Charter issued by Henry III in 1228 which exempted a portion of Horwood (alias Kingswood, north of Bristol) from Forest Law.[60] Dyer has quoted examples of seigniorial and peasant assarting in the thirteenth century, such as the 200 acres cleared in the Forest of Dean by Tintern Abbey in 1282 and the 41 parcels of waste let to tenants in Stapleton in 1294-5.[61] He has stated that in the fourteenth century evidence of new settlement, more often than not, relates to woodland districts. There is more evidence of assarting in the Forest of Dean and other woodland areas of Gloucestershire such as Michaelwood. Dyer has suggested that licenses to assart granted in this period may refer to land already cleared.[62] Finberg and Dyer have described how the Berkeley family became heavily involved in the assarting movement in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; they cleared woodland and improved waterlogged ground at places such as Michaelwood and Slimbridge. Other improvement schemes were in operation on the salt marshes of Henbury at the same time.[63]

In his analysis of the 'retreat from marginal land' in England in the later Middle Ages, Dyer has suggested that remaining areas of dense woodland, particularly those with thin soils and steep slopes, such as the Forest of Dean are indicative that the limits of cultivation had been reached by *c.* 1300.[64] However, Dyer has shown how the 'retreat' was not always from land that would be considered 'marginal.'[65] He draws attention to the evidence of deserted medieval villages in the

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[60] *Ibid.*, p. 79.

[61] Dyer, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, pp. 228-29.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

[63] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80; Dyer, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, p. 232.

[64] C. Dyer, 'The Retreat from Marginal Land: The Growth and Decline of Medieval Rural Settlements', *The Rural Settlements of Medieval England*, ed. M. Aston, D. Austin and C. Dyer, (Oxford, 1989), p. 48.

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-54.

northeast of Gloucestershire and explains that they were frequently places of long established settlement. He cites these Cotswold villages as examples of a situation where human factors could influence the profitability of cultivatable land and he says that the lands on which these villages were based supported a wealthy Romano-British population and were used for widespread arable farming in the tenth and eleventh centuries. He also notes how modern Cotswold farmers grow extensive amounts of vegetables and cereals. However, by the early fourteenth century hundreds of acres lay uncultivated in the region and there is evidence of the poverty of villages and tenants who were being forced to leave their holdings.[66] Dyer has suggested that a combination of factors was the likely cause of this retreat and desertion in this area of the Cotswolds. One regional factor that seems to have had an influence on the process was that the fertility of the soil in areas where a two-course rotation was common was dependent on "the combination of sheep and corn."[67] Dyer mentions the importance of sheep being placed on the arable following their feeding on hill pastures. They could then tread their dung into the soil to improve its fertility. He says that any interference to this pattern could lead to ruinous problems and he cites an example from 1327 in Temple Guiting where the temporary absence of sheep led to a decline in the grain yield of the demesne to a loss-making situation.[68] He suggests that other factors such as increased taxation and rents and a succession of sheep scab epidemics would have confounded the problems in some areas and may have affected the peasantry particularly badly.[69]

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

The Domesday survey recognised four boroughs in Gloucestershire: Gloucester, Winchcombe, Tewkesbury and Bristol. By the early fourteenth century there were some 26 boroughs in the county - one of the highest proportions in England.[70] The smaller boroughs had very varied fortunes, usually connected with the locality they served. The larger towns such as Gloucester and Bristol developed into very important centres. Gloucester had a specific strategic and administrative role and Bristol came to enjoy a commercial success that could be rivalled by few other towns.[71]

6.3 Agriculture

Hallam has stated that the open-field system had been decisively established in Gloucestershire by the reign of Edward the Confessor.[72] The Domesday survey revealed the county to contain one of the highest proportions of manors with large tracts of arable demesne in England.[73] Dyer has related the old settled areas with the two-field system. He claims that the location of three-field villages is primarily "in or near to new settlement districts" of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[74] In Gloucestershire as a whole the two-field system appears to have been predominant. Finberg has claimed that the Domesday evidence indicates that large areas of both the Vale and the Cotswolds were under the plough in the late eleventh century.[75] He

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[70] P. Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 2; Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

[72] H. E. Hallam, 'England before the Norman Conquest', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.*, p. 42.

[73] Harvey, 'Domesday England', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.*, pp. 87-8.

[74] Dyer, 'Farming Techniques: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. II, *1042-1350, op. cit.*, p. 369.

[75] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

believes that population rise in the thirteenth century led to a change towards a three-field system in many parishes, although these were mainly situated in the Vale, whereas a two-field system was maintained throughout much of the Cotswolds, even until the eighteenth century.[76]

Walker has raised an intriguing point relating to the Domesday survey of Gloucestershire. He notes that, as a rule, pasture was not recorded as one of the economic assets of villages despite the fact that throughout the Middle Ages Gloucestershire "was a centre of wool production and of the wool trade".[77] He describes this as a "remarkable omission."[78] Walker believes that there should be a notable distinction between the particular economies of the Cotswolds and the Vale but his analysis of the Domesday data led him to conclude that in the eleventh century there was "little to choose between these two major sections of the county" in terms of agriculture and settlement.[79]

Finberg has stated "throughout recorded history the main emphasis of Cotswold husbandry has alternately veered from corn to sheep and from sheep to corn again."[80] Dyer has recognized the importance of the working of both arable and pastoral systems in unison claiming that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the "whole agrarian system" of parts of the Cotswolds functioned in an "integrated" manner.[81] Hilton has used the Cotswolds to provide examples of the "mixed pastoral

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[76] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[77] D. Walker, 'Gloucester and Gloucestershire in Domesday Book', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 94, (1976), p. 113.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[80] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[81] Dyer, 'Sheepcotes', *op. cit.*, p. 160.

and arable husbandry" which he sees as a characteristic of the West Midlands region.[82]

Finberg has shown that the Cotswold's wool industry was very important in Roman times and suggests that Anglo-Saxon place-name elements suggest that it remained important in the pre-Conquest period. He claims that the sheep pastures became especially important to the Christian abbeys which became founded in Gloucestershire during the Anglo-Saxon period.[83]

The upland areas of the Cotswolds and the wooded areas of the county provided greater tracts of pasture than the river valleys and clay plains. There were considerable variations in the pasture available to landlords in the centuries following the Domesday survey. Dyer has found evidence for this in the lists of demesne livestock in manorial accounts. Most of the evidence for large flocks of sheep was from upland manors such as Minchinhampton and Todenham along with some in woodland areas. Evidence for large herds of cattle tended to be in areas with extensive meadows such as the valleys of the Cam and the Coaley.[84]

Finberg has claimed that in the twelfth century, Gloucestershire, particularly the Vale, had gained a reputation as the foremost wine-growing area of England[85] although Dyer maintains that the vineyards planted in Gloucestershire in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries had largely gone out of use by the late thirteenth century.[86] He suggests that most manors had a garden and that peasants tended to have small plots attached to their houses, although he noted very little evidence for

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[82] Hilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

[83] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

[84] Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*,p. 375.

[85] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

[86] Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 380.

peasant gardening.[87] He has established that there were local differences in crop types but claims that it is possible to recognize western Gloucestershire, on either side of the Severn "as primarily a wheat and oats district", while on the Cotswolds "wheat, barley and/or drage and oats were the predominant crops".[88]

In the fourteenth century agricultural decline, famine and plague all contributed to a general reduction in new settlement and arable farming. This situation is reflected in some counties by the increase in pasture at the expense of arable. Dyer has argued that the West Midlands region as a whole "retained its basis in arable cultivation" despite the advance of pasture.[89] There is evidence to show that arable was on the decline in some districts of the county in the later Middle Ages, particularly in the northern Cotswolds and also in areas where settlement was relatively new.[90] Finberg believes that by the mid fourteenth century ploughland had reached its widest extent and had even begun to contract in areas of the Vale.[91] He sees the development of the wool industry as the primary reason for this as people began to realize that "sheep-farming held greater promise of wealth than tillage."[92] He qualifies this statement by explaining that during this period England exported, on average, 30,000 sacks of wool a year "and the Cotswolds had long been one of the principal sources of supply."[93] He suggests that the rise in the importance of sheep husbandry in the Cotswolds in the later Middle Ages may be one of the reasons why

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[87] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

[89] C. Dyer, 'Farming Practice and Technique: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. III, *1348-1500*, ed. E. Miller, (Cambridge, 1991), p. 222.

[90] Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 383.

[91] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

this region retained a two-field system, so as to allow more fallow for grazing.[94] Indeed, Dyer has shown how the retention of a two-field system was not necessarily evidence of the lack of innovation in a particular area, rather the decision could involve "careful consideration of the disadvantages of such an 'improvement'."[95] In other words, the delicate balance between pastoral and arable farming could be of great importance in regions such as the Cotswolds. Despite the importance of the industry to the Cotswolds, some communities suffered and there is evidence of deserted medieval villages and poverty in some districts, particularly in the north.[96]

The rise in the demand for English wool from Flanders encouraged farmers to enlarge their flocks and to convert arable to pasture. This process may also help explain the rise in the numbers of deserted settlements in the Cotswolds.[97] Dyer has shown how this process affected the Cotswolds more than other regions. He says that the settlements in question "had developed in their hey-day a specialized system of farming that involved the cultivation of extensive arable acres under strict communal control."[98] He also suggests that the reduced demand for grain, which was particularly apparent after 1375, led many peasants to "adopt mixed agriculture with a growing emphasis on pasture."[99] He says that in woodland districts and areas like the Severn Valley "change was relatively easily accommodated because there was much enclosure and mixed land use already."[100]

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[94] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[95] Dyer, 'Sheepcotes', *op. cit.*, p. 155. Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 370.

[96] C. Dyer, 'Deserted Medieval Villages in the West Midlands', *The Economic History Review*, Vol. XXXV, (1982), pp. 19-34; 'Sheepcotes', *op. cit.*, pp. 136-164.

[97] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p.p. 84-85; Dyer, 'Deserted Medieval Villages', *op. cit.*, pp. 19-34.

[98] Dyer, 'Deserted Medieval Villages', *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[100] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Finberg is keen to point out that despite the overall rise in sheep farming, corn-growing never "dwindled into insignificance."[101] However, the fortunes of the county had become closely tied with those of the wool industry. Exports of raw wool fell in the later fourteenth century but the export of manufactured cloth rose throughout the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and Gloucestershire was at the heart of this developing industry. The Cotswolds became the main manufacturing region and the towns of Gloucester and Bristol in the Vale capitalized on the export trade.[102] Dyer has emphasized the profitability of Cotswold wool. He says that in the late fourteenth century it fetched £8-10 per sack at a time when the national average was between £5 and £6. [103]

In the post-medieval period the clothing industry developed further with the town of Stroud becoming its main focal point. The Forest of Dean came to be seen as a very important source of wood for shipbuilding and coal mining began to take over from iron production as the most important industry in that region.[104] Finberg has suggested that the period from the sixteenth through to the mid nineteenth centuries saw the "most dramatic alteration of the landscape" with the "enclosure of the common ploughlands and pastures."[105] He claims that the process was almost complete by the mid nineteenth century.

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[101] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 86-88.

[103] Dyer, 'Sheepcotes', *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[104] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-100.

[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

6.4 Gloucestershire feet of fines: Statistics and analysis.

It will be interesting to compare the results of the data from the Gloucestershire Fines with the other counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire examined in this study. All three counties have borders with Wales but Gloucestershire's is less immediate due to the River Severn and the Forest of Dean. While Shropshire and Herefordshire have similar amounts of fines for the period (1440 and 1401 respectively) Gloucestershire has far more (2476). Gloucestershire has three very distinct physical regions, whereas the other counties have a much more varied character.

There are a number of questions relating to Gloucestershire that fines can help to answer. Walker's concerns over the similarities between the Cotswolds and the Vale of Gloucester, as suggested by *Domesday Book,* can be examined for the period 1199-1508. The data will allow trends to be plotted and the dating of the development of regions will be possible. Fines may also be able to provide evidence of the assarting movement in Gloucestershire. This evidence can then be compared in a meaningful way with the other counties in the study. Dyer has used *Inquisitions post mortem* to show decline in arable in Gloucestershire in the fourteenth century. Fines can also be used for this purpose, and since they were used by a broad section of society, over a long period of time, they can be particularly valuable in plotting such events. Again, it will be interesting to compare the results with the other counties to see whether Dyer's suggestion that the West Midlands, as a region, was less susceptible to the advance of pasture than other areas and whether each county followed this trend.[106]

[106] Dyer, 'Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales,* Vol. III, 1348-1500, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

The Gloucestershire feet of fines record a total of 202,511 acres of land. This is over double the amount of land recorded in the Herefordshire fines (100,494 acres) and considerably more than the 114,668 acres recorded in the Shropshire fines. It has been possible to identify the place-names and therefore the parish identity for 165,209 acres in Gloucestershire. This represents 82% of the total.

Table G1: Gloucestershire Feet of Fines 1199-1508. Numbers and average sizes of transactions involving major land-types.

Land Type	Number of fines	Total acreage	Times mentioned	Percentage of total	Average acreage per mention	Average acreage per document
Arable	1472	151920	2424	75	62.6	103.2
Meadow	650	11191	1223	5.5	9.1	17.2
Pasture	250	16100	567	7.95	29	64.4
Wood	265	6449	597	3.18	10.8	24.3
Heath	5	166	7	0.08	23.7	33.2
Moor	5	119	8	0.05	14.8	23.8
Land	36	16440	36	8.1	456	456
Totals		**202385**		**100 %**		

Table G1 displays the major land-types recorded, the number of fines each land type occurs in, the number of times each land type is mentioned, the total acreages for each land-type, the percentages of the total acreages recorded and the average acreage of each land type, per mention and per fine. The slight discrepancy between the total acreage noted in the table and the figure quoted in the above

paragraph is due to a few incidents of unidentified land types occurring in the documents.

The table reveals that some 75% of the total land transferred in the Gloucestershire fines is arable. This is very close to the 73% recorded for Shropshire and noticeably less than the 85% recorded for Herefordshire. The average arable acreage, per mention, of 62.6 is similar to Shropshire's 58.4. Herefordshire's is a little lower at 52 acres. When land types other than arable are considered in feet of fines, relatively small percentage differences can be seen as significant. The percentage of meadow in Gloucestershire (5.5%) is noticeably higher than Shropshire (3.4%) and Herefordshire (4%). The percentage of wood in Gloucestershire (3.2%) is very similar to Herefordshire (3.4%). This reinforces the point that wood was a more significant commodity throughout the medieval period in Shropshire than the other counties. Perhaps the most revealing feature to come from the above table is the overall percentage of pasture in Gloucestershire (almost 8%). This compares with 4% for Herefordshire and 4.6% for Shropshire. This statistic may well be indicative of Gloucestershire's status as a major centre for the medieval wool trade. Before any major assumptions can be made it is necessary to analyse the above figures over time.

Table G2 reveals a familiar pattern with most fines occurring in the first half of the period and a significant rise in the first half of the fourteenth century. When compared with Shropshire and Herefordshire, the most interesting feature is the large number of fines issued in the early thirteenth century; 363 compared with 184 for Shropshire and 257 for Herefordshire. This suggests that fines became a popular method of conveyance in Gloucestershire before the other counties and that the population figures and the market for land were higher. To gain a clearer picture of this process it is possible to examine the various land-types over time (see graph G3).

Table G2: Transaction averages of fines that mention land of all types.

Years	Number of fines	Average number per year	Average total acreage per fine	Average acreage transferred per year
1199-1250	363	7.1	93.5	665.5
1251-1302	311	6.0	80.7	492.6
1303-1352	425	8.6	105	911
1353-1404	197	3.8	90.8	350.8
1405-1455	136	2.72	135.3	368
1456-1508	117	2.25	336.9	758
Totals	**1549**			

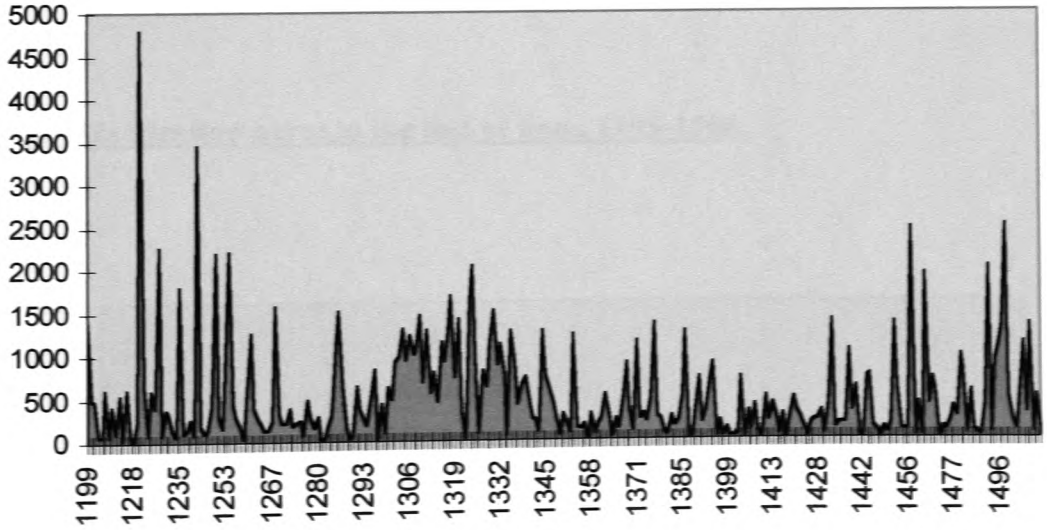
The fact that the overall number of fines concerned with land transfers is notably less than the overall number of fines issued is indicative of the importance of 'urban fines' in Gloucestershire, particularly in relation to Gloucester and Bristol, a factor that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Table G3: Average area and number of fines that mention land.

	ARABLE		MEADOW		PASTURE		WOOD		TOTAL	
Years	Number of fines	Average area	Number of fines	Average area	Number of fines	Average area	Number of fines	Average area	Number of fines	Average area
1199-1250	323	74.5	24	2.29	3	1	5	3	363	93.5
1251-1302	291	72.88	51	5.85	18	9	28	16.3	311	80.7
1303-1352	419	94.3	234	9.6	51	12.7	77	16	425	105
1353-1404	190	81.3	123	8.69	30	22.7	50	13.46	197	90.8
1405-1455	129	105.2	110	11.5	59	50	48	12.4	136	135.3
1456-1508	112	206.6	102	42	87	104.6	54	48	117	336.9
Totals									**1549**	

This table reveals some interesting trends. Arable and meadow have been transferred in much greater amounts in the first half of the period than in Shropshire and Herefordshire. The importance of meadow is particularly interesting. For example, in the first half of the thirteenth century meadow is recorded in 24 Gloucestershire fines in comparison with four in Shropshire and just one in Herefordshire. There is a continuous rise in the average area of pasture transferred throughout the period. There is a definite peak in the amount of woodland transfers in the early fourteenth century in keeping with the trend apparent in the other counties. The following graphs will examine these trends in more detail.

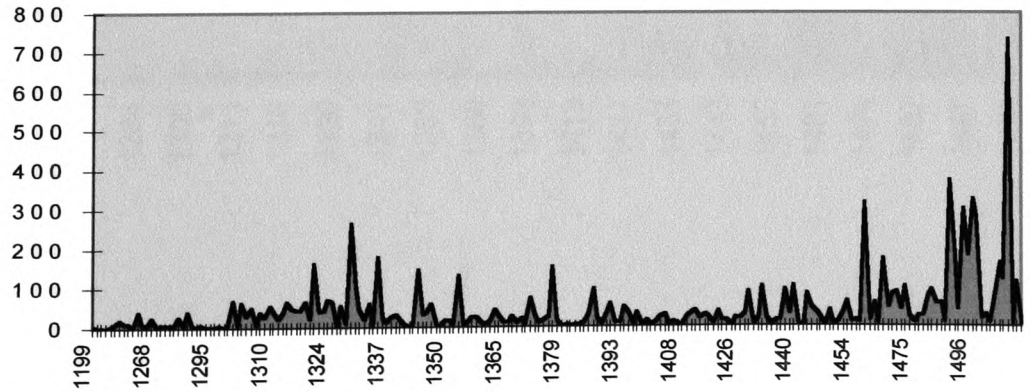
Graph G1: Arable acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



This graph indicates a sustained rise in the amount of arable transferred in the early fourteenth century which is comparable to the equivalent graphs for

Herefordshire and Shropshire. It suggests that the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century had an effect on the conveyance of land in Gloucestershire also. The high, narrow peaks apparent in the thirteenth century around such years as 1220, 1235, 1240, 1247, 1254, 1260, 1268 and 1286 are the result of increased numbers of fines being issued when the Assize and Eyre visited Gloucestershire and its neighbouring counties. For example, in 1240, eighty-eight fines were issued in Gloucester and Bristol in comparison to just five issued, relating to Gloucestershire, in 1238 at Westminster. The sharp rises and falls in the late fifteenth century are due to a reduction in the number of fines issued per year, coupled with an increase in the average area of land transferred. For example, in 1485, John Walsh, esquire, obtained the manor of Little Sodbury and the advowson of its church, along with 600 acres of arable, 100 acres of meadow, 500 acres of pasture and 200 acres of wood in Little Sodbury, Old Sodbury, Chipping Sodbury, Haresfield, Pucklechurch and Dursley, from Richard Forster, esquire and Thomas Morton and his wife, Dorathea.[107]

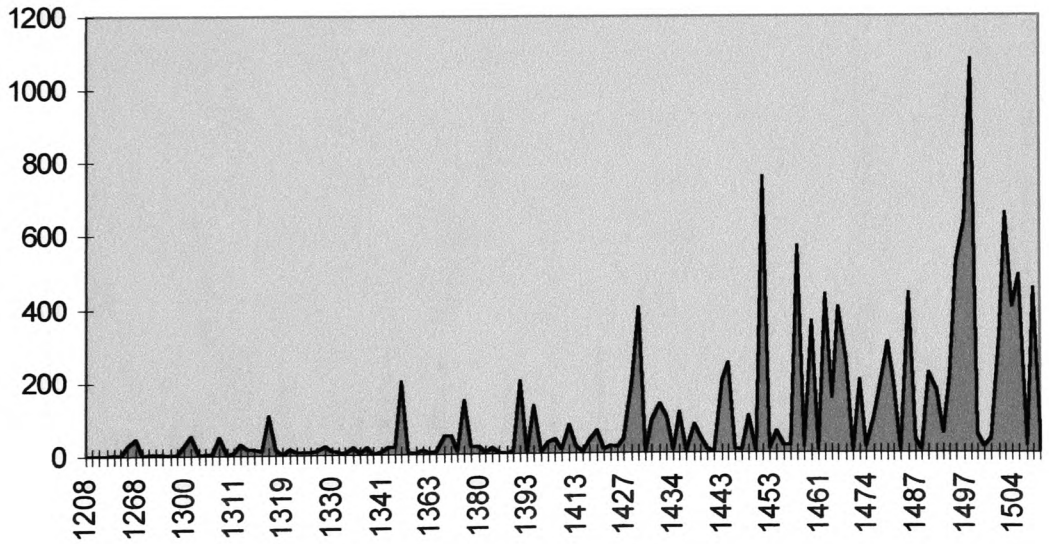
Graph G2: Meadow acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



[107] PRO: CP25/1/79/96/2.

The first fine to mention meadow in Gloucestershire was in 1199 when Benedict Maur obtained four acres of it along with ten acres of arable in Hasfield, from Arnold de Esselleswich.[108] The last fine to mention meadow was the last document in the series between Robert and Thomas Rycardes, issued in Westminster in 1508. The details of this fine are mentioned above in the introductory paragraph of this chapter.[109] The graph suggests a fairly consistent picture of meadow conveyances throughout the period until the later fifteenth century when larger parcels of land were transferred per fine.

Graph G3: Pasture acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.

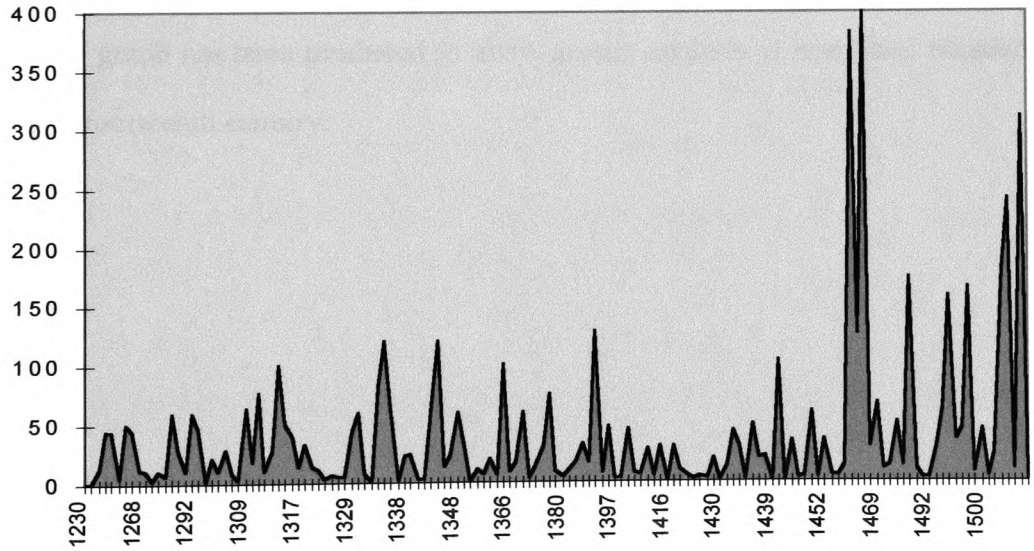


[108] PRO: CP25/1/73/1/11.

[109] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/77.

In 1208, Abbot Joscelin obtained the pasture of Sunderland and one hide of arable in Guiting Power from Walter Le Poer.[110] This was the first mention of pasture (as distinct from meadow) in the Gloucestershire series. The final fine in the series which has already been mentioned was the last to mention pasture (44 acres near Berkeley).[111] There is a sustained growth in the amount of pasture conveyed from the early years of the fifteenth century to the end of the period. Some very large acreages were transferred during this period, such as the 400 acres in Nympsfield obtained by Thomas Poyntz, esquire from John Walsh in 1507.[112]

Graph G4: Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



[110] PRO: CP25/1/73/3/61.

[111] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/77.

[112] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/73.

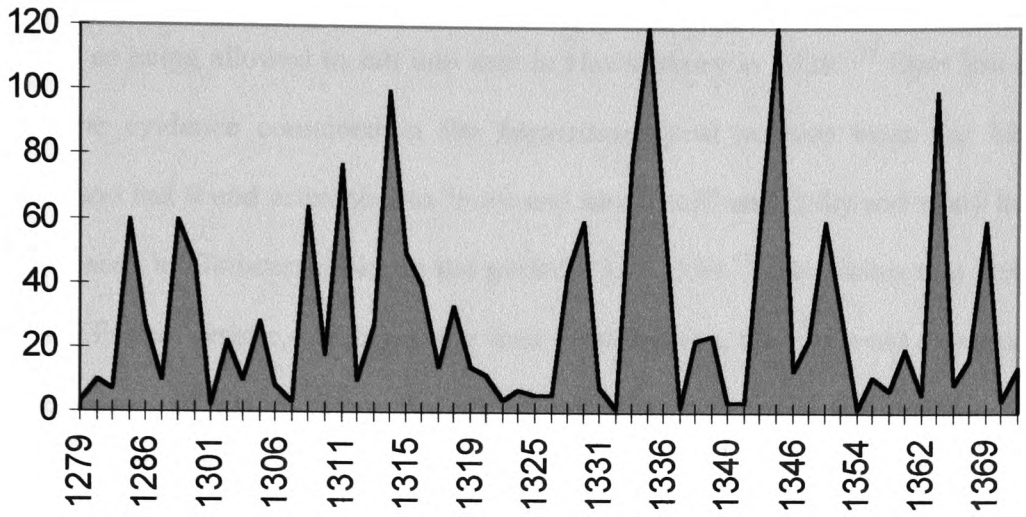
The first Gloucestershire fine to mention wood was issued in Westminster in 1230 and involved the transfer of an unspecified amount of wood in Slimbridge from Richard de Blaisdon to Abbot Osmund.[113] The first fine to mention a specific amount of wood was issued in Gloucester in 1235 and involved the conveyance of one acre along with 14 acres of arable, one acre of meadow, a messuage and a mill in Chedworth, from Nicholas son of Richard to William de Hudekenesse.[114] The last fine in the series mentioned in connection with the other land-types above also mentions wood (two acres near Berkeley).[115] There is a sharp rise in the amount of woodland mentioned in the later fifteenth century. This is due to an increase in the overall area of land transferred in this period per fine. It is possible that the small cluster of transfers *c.* 1309-1320 are indicative of an increase in the amount of woodland to be converted to arable in the face of the famine years of the early fourteenth century. The following graph has been produced to allow greater analysis of woodland transfers in the early fourteenth century.

[113] PRO: CP25/1/73/9/135.

[114] PRO: CP25/1/73/10/157.

[115] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/77.

Graph G5: Wood acres in the feet of fines, 1279-1375.



There is evidence of a clustering of woodland transfers around the year 1315 with perhaps the most significant "block" of data occurring at this time. This is in keeping with the view that such conveyances occurred at the height of the famine.

6.5 Gloucestershire feet of fines and the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century.

The background to the "crisis" has been examined in Chapter 4. Dyer has used a variety of sources to examine the course of the "crisis" in the West Midlands. His analysis of manorial extents and accounts has led him to conclude that the retreat from the arable was quite notable in the period 1320-50. He quotes an example of uncultivated demesne arable from this period in Morton and Whaddon

(Gloucestershire)[116]; his examination of Court Rolls for the 1340s has established that four places in Gloucestershire had evidence of tenants abandoning their holdings: North Cerney, Little Aston, Chedworth and Aylworth and Harford (in Naunton).[117] Manorial Court records have also highlighted problems, such as the buildings described as being allowed to fall into ruin in Hawkesbury in 1328.[118] Dyer has also studied the evidence contained in the *Inquisitions post mortem* from the 1320s onwards and has found references to "poor and sandy soil" and "hilly and stony land" in nine places in Gloucestershire in the period 1325-1349.[119] He claims that certain places in Gloucestershire, notably to the west of the Severn, the Cotswold escarpment and even some villages in "old-settled areas", began "to experience retreat."[120]

When compared with the other two counties, Gloucestershire is seen to have had many more fines issued in the thirteenth century. Gloucestershire was an important county within England, containing the major centres of Gloucester and Bristol. It is probable that the county was quicker to adapt to new ideas from Westminster than the other counties. By the fourteenth century fines would have been viewed as a very useful method of obtaining land quickly.

The data for all three counties supports the view that transfers of various land-types increased during the period c. 1315-1318. Graph G6 below displays the total number of fines issued per year for the whole period and shows a sustained and definite increase in the early fourteenth century. The most noticeable block is between 1300 and 1330. The large narrow peaks in the thirteenth century are the result of

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[116] Dyer, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, pp. 232.

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[118] *Ibid.*, p. 233.

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

[120] *Ibid.*, p. 234.

increased numbers of fines being issued during years when the Assize court and the Eyre visited Gloucestershire and its neighbouring counties. It is apparent that transfers of arable were significant in the early fourteenth century (see graph G1 above). It seems likely that the market for arable land was stimulated by the famine, as people who were finding it increasingly difficult to afford corn, tried to obtain land to grow their own. Dyer has stated, "Adversity provided a powerful spur to the market in land."[121] He quotes an example from Tardebigge, Worcestershire where, he says, "the courts handled on average less than three transfers of land at each session in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries."[122] However, during the course of four sessions held during the Great Famine, 1316-17, "at least thirty-seven transfers are recorded."[123]

When the years of the Great Famine are analysed it can be seen that as in the other counties, Gloucestershire experienced transfers well above average during the period. The average number of Gloucestershire fines issued per year during the period 1300-50 is fifteen. The following list reveals figures well above average during the period of the famine:

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[121] Dyer, 'Social Structure: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol.II, *1042-1350*, *op. cit.*, p. 672.

[122] *Ibid.*, p. 672.

[123] *Ibid.*, p. 672.

1311 = 15

1312 = 8

1313 = 19

1314 = 17

1315 = 20

1316 = 28

1317 = 23

1318 = 26

1319 = 16

1320 = 26

1321 = 11

1322 = 8

The year 1316 stands out as having the highest overall amount of transfers in the period 1300-50. Most of the Gloucestershire vills with problems in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* are shown to have been in the far northeast of the county and there is some correlation here with a cluster of arable transfers centred on the parish of Eastleach Martin during the early fourteenth-century.

Overall, fines reveal the adjacent parishes of Berkeley and Lydney (on opposing sides of the River Severn) to have had the most significant amount of transfers during the worst years of the famine. Although these parishes are not recorded as experiencing problems in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*, an examination of the individual documents has suggested some interesting possibilities. Firstly, in many

of the documents relating to the parish of Berkeley the enterprising Berkeley family plays a prominent role in the acquisition of land. This resilient family appears in documents relating to the area throughout the whole medieval period where they are seen to be both acquiring and disposing of land. For example, they are shown to have bought and sold woodland during the peak of the assarting movement in the thirteenth century (see section 6.6v below). In the period of the Great Famine, however, they only appear to have been buying land. For example, in 1316 Thomas de Berkeley (Snr.), through his attorney Richard de Salle, obtained a virgate of arable, four acres of meadow and a messuage in Alkington by Berkeley from William atte Wode and his wife Matilda.[124] In the same year de Salle, again acting on behalf of de Berkeley at Westminster, arranged the transfer of 60 acres of arable and two acres of meadow in Ham and Alkington (both in Berkeley) from Hugh de Croweford and his wife Margia.[125] It is possible that the Berkeley family was reacting to the bad harvests by ensuring that they had enough land to maintain profitable production.

The activity in Berkeley may have stimulated the land market across the Severn in Lydney. There is evidence to suggest that some of the families acquiring land and property in the Berkeley area at this time were also doing so in Lydney. For example, in 1315 Henry Le Gardiner and his wife Isabella obtained a messuage and appurtenances in Berkeley from William de Elmore.[126] The attorney who acted on behalf of Henry at Westminster was Richard de Salle, presumably the same man who dealt with the Berkeley family transactions. This suggests a possible link between the Gardiner family and the Berkeley family at this time which is also apparent in 1316 when a certain Elis Le Gardiner and his wife Agnette obtained 12 acres of arable in

[124] PRO: CP25/1/76/48/167.

[125] PRO: CP25/1/76/48/168.

[126] PRO: CP25/1/76/46/125.

Purton (Lydney) from John Waryn.[127] Again Richard de Salle is seen to be acting on behalf of the Gardiner family. In the same year Henry Le Gardiner, this time apparently acting without the assistance of an attorney, obtained 40 acres of arable, an acre of meadow and a messuage in Purton (Lydney) from Robert Bastard.[128]

It is possible, therefore, that parishes on the western bank of the Severn were attracting settlement in the early fourteenth century as land came to be in short supply due to population pressures and there was an impetus to put more land under the plough in an attempt to alleviate the problems caused by poor harvests. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that people from outside Gloucestershire may have been obtaining land in the area at this time. For example, in 1315 John de Bromwich obtained ten acres of arable and a messuage from Walter de Staunton.[129]

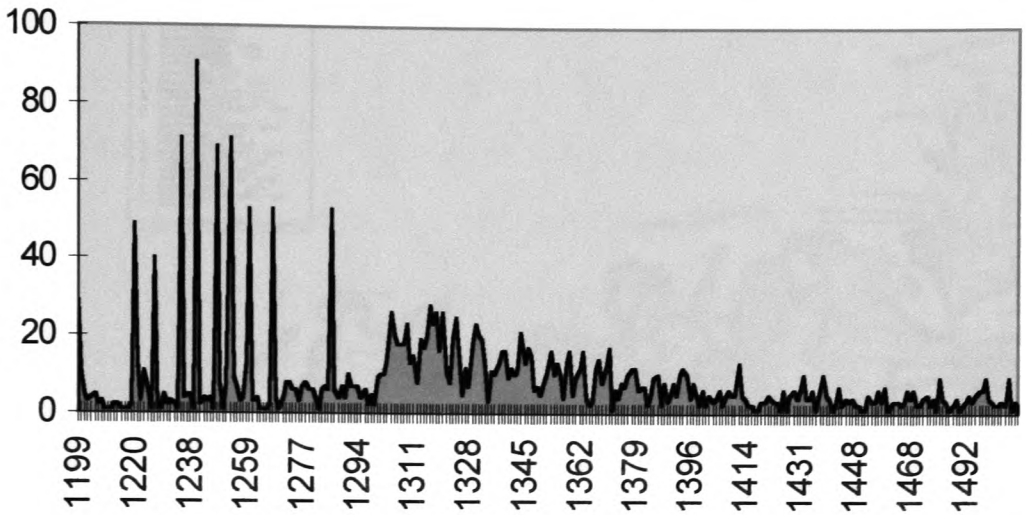
The following graph highlights the increase in the amount of fines transferred in the early fourteenth century and, as in Herefordshire and Shropshire, is indicative of a rise in the market for land, probably facilitated by high mortality levels and a desire to obtain land to grow corn during the worst years of the famine.

[127] PRO: CP25/1/76/48/155.

[128] PRO: CP25/1/76/48/156.

[129] PRO: CP25/1/76/48/151.

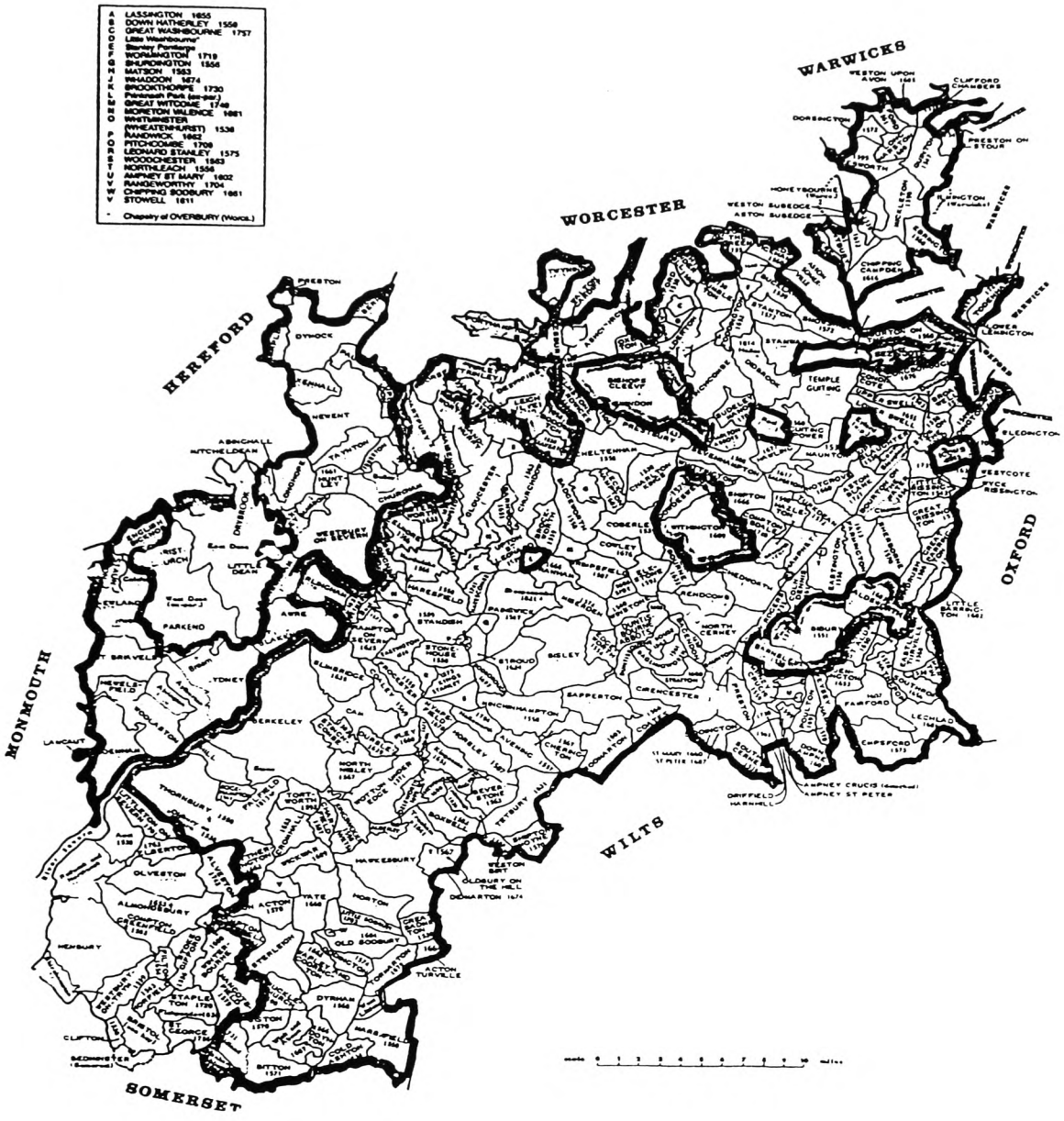
Graph G6: Total numbers of fines issued per year.



6.6: Distribution of land types and settlement in Gloucestershire, mapping the evidence.

The following maps show the distribution and densities of the various land types throughout the regions of Gloucestershire. They have been generated by joining the database of fines to digitized parish and regional maps. The names of the various parishes are displayed on map G4. The data has been organized into approximate fifty-year time spans. The maps can be used alongside the above graphs and tables to reveal trends in the historical-geography of the Gloucestershire landscape. The data will be assessed on a regional level and also on a parish level when more localized trends become apparent.

G4: Gloucestershire parishes (after the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies).



6.6(i) Distribution and density of land types, 1199-1508.

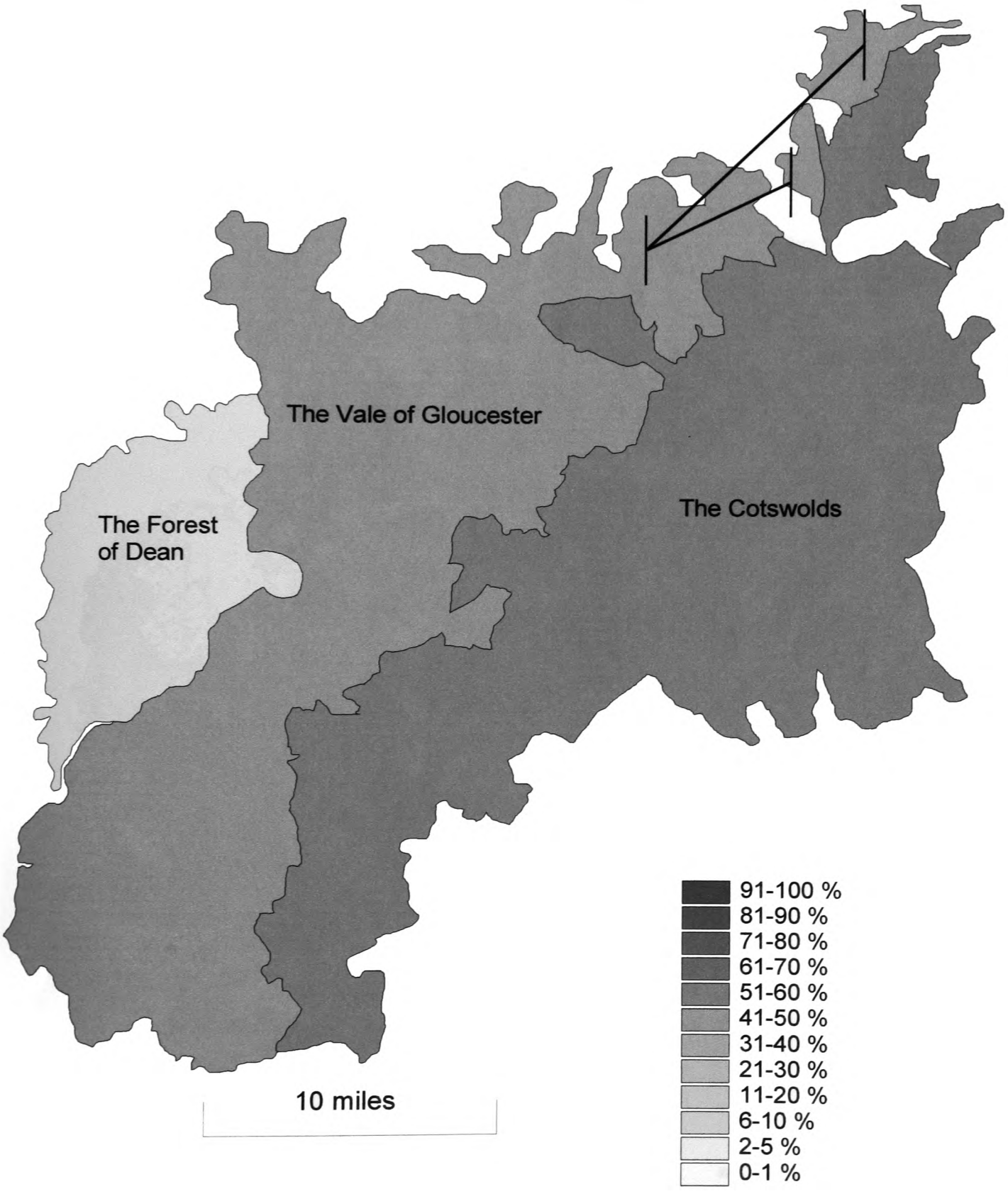
Map G5 reveals percentages of the total acreages of all types of land, recorded in the fines 1199-1508, on a regional level. The Cotswolds region is shown to have the highest percentage of transferred land (52%). The Vale of Gloucester is next highest with 42.5% and the small Forest of Dean region has just 5.5%. Because Gloucestershire has two very large regions and one much smaller one the data for this map is somewhat influenced by the relative sizes of the regions. There is also the fact that settlement patterns were influenced by Dean's forest status. This helps explains why evidence of woodland transfers in this region are sometimes less significant than one might expect. Hooke encountered a similar problem in her study of the place-name element *lēah* in the West Midlands. The term *lēah,* she explains, is an Old English word that has "always implied open woodland and it is not surprising to find it occurring most often upon the edges of thickly wooded regions although it sometimes continued in use in the names of individual woods."[130] She claims that gaps in the evidence "indicate the most extensively cleared areas or, paradoxically, the heavily wooded regions in which there was little settlement."[131] She noted that the Forest of Dean was one such region.

Map G6 shows that transactions are fairly widespread throughout all the regions of the county although it is clear that they are less apparent in the Forest of Dean as well as in some of the parishes in the far east on the Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire borders. In the Cotswolds there are particularly dense areas of transfers in the extreme south around Cold Ashton and Tormarton and a significant belt running south to north between Shipton Moyne and Notgrove. The

[130] Hooke, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[131] Hooke, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

G5: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



G6: Distribution of acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.

extreme north and east of this region are less well represented. In the Vale of Gloucester there is an important band of transactions either side of the River Severn between Deerhurst and Gloucester and a wide, but less dense area, centred on the large parish of Berkeley and another a little farther south around Aust and at Henbury. Records are less dense in the north of this region around Hinton on the Green, although there is a significant tract on the Warwickshire border, near Weston-on-Avon and Welford. In the Forest of Dean region there are notable clusters of transactions around Newland and English Bicknor. These parishes bordered Archenfield and the Ryelands which developed into important agricultural regions of Herefordshire as the medieval period progressed. The more traditional forest areas of West and East Dean are less well covered. It must be remembered that settlement in this region would have been inhibited because of the restrictions imposed by the Crown because of the status of the region as a Royal Forest.

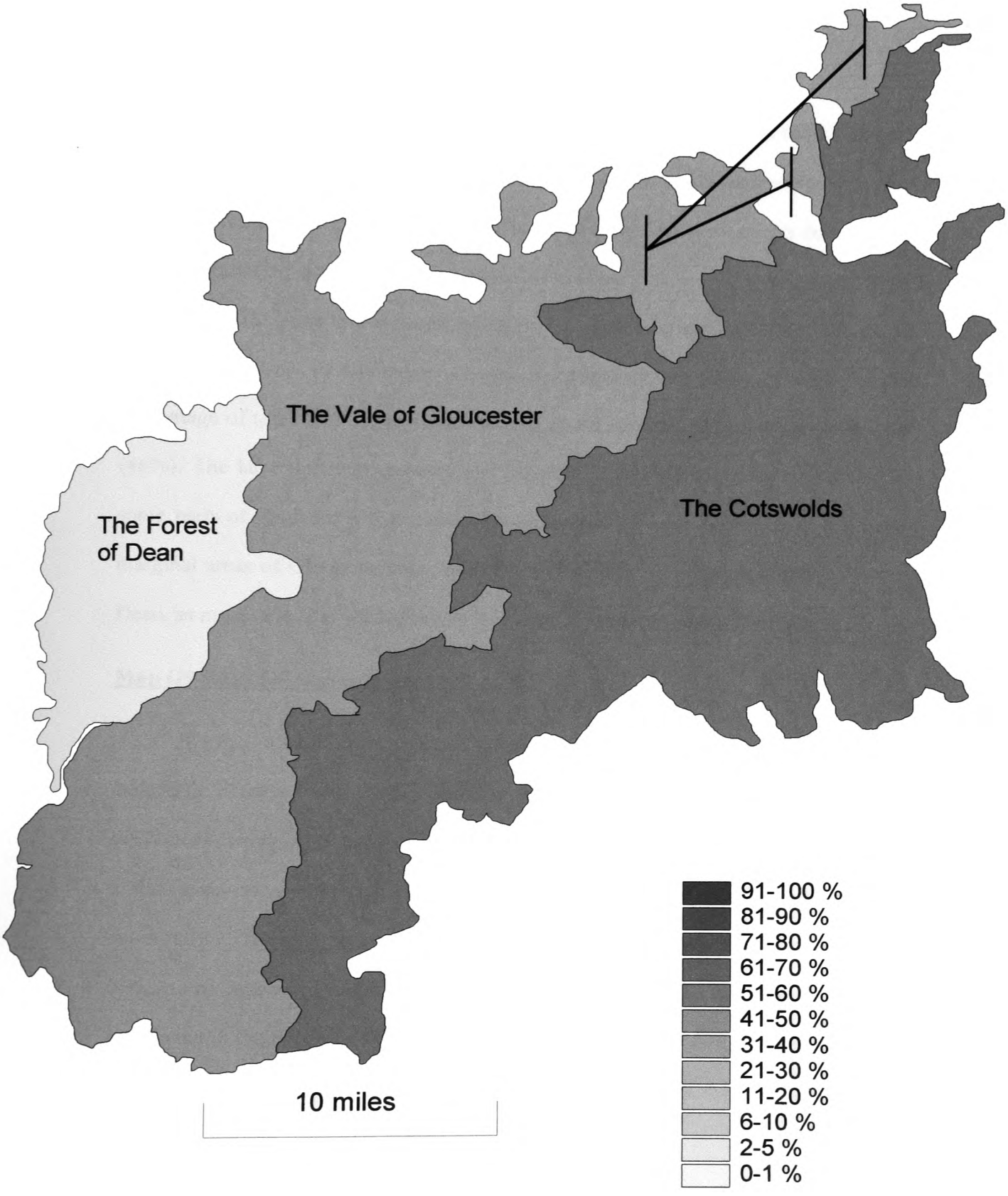
6.6(ii) Changes in land over time.

The next series of maps, G7 to G12, reveal the changes apparent in the percentages of total acreages of all types of land over time.

Map G7: Regional percentages, 1199-1250.

The Cotswolds region is shown to have the most significant activity with a higher percentage of land conveyed (almost 60%) than the other two regions together. The Forest of Dean has a very low percentage in this period (1.5%) but the Vale of Gloucester has a reasonable 39%. In terms of distribution within the regions, the Vale and the Cotswolds have similar percentages of parishes with transactions (46% and 47% respectively); in other words almost half of the parishes in those two regions had

G7: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



final concords associated with them during this period. The Forest of Dean had slightly less activity with 39% of its parishes having transactions.

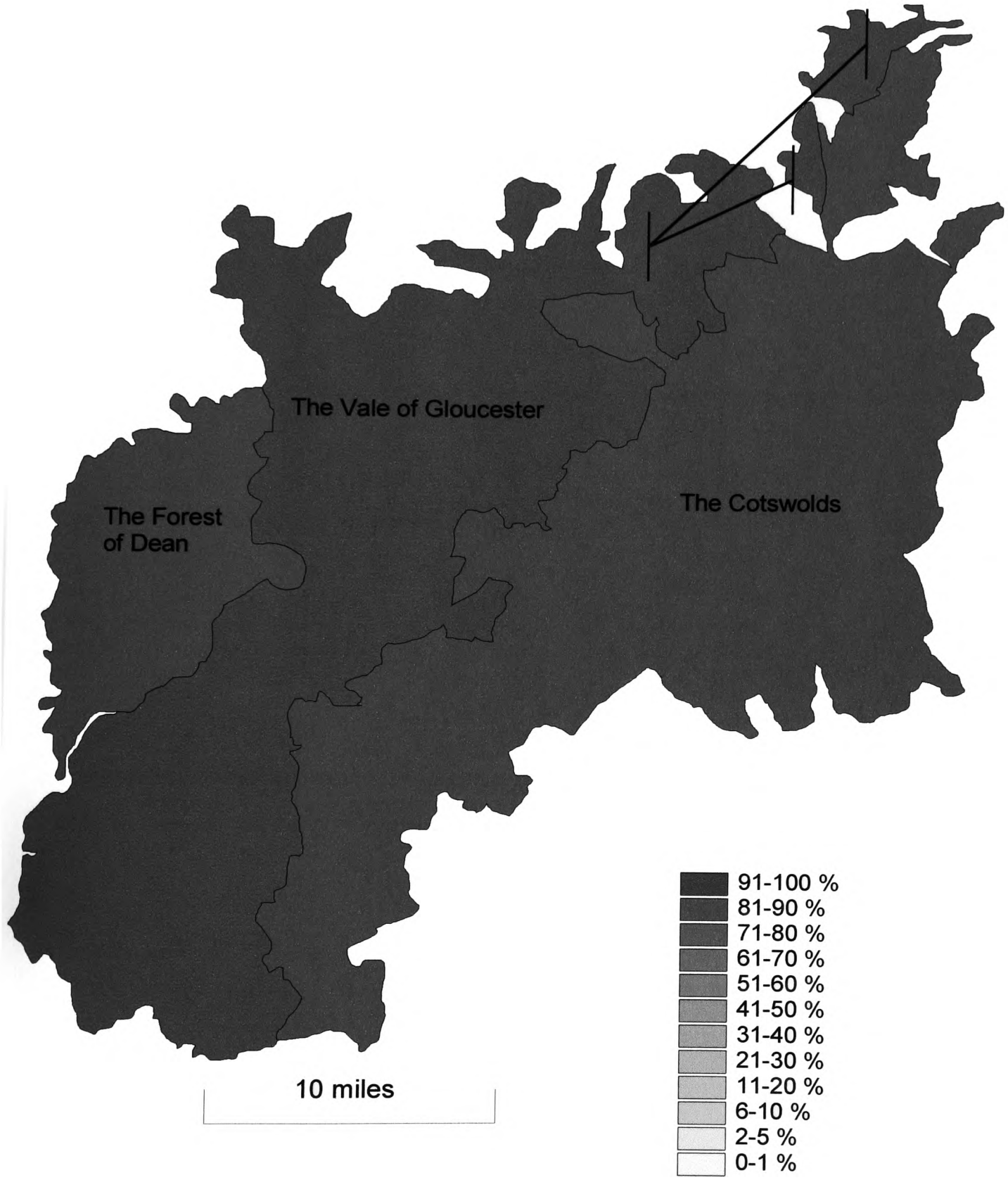
Map G8: Regional percentages, 1251-1302.

This map reveals a similar pattern to the previous one although there has been a notable fall in the Cotswolds, which now has 51% of the total land transferred, and a subsequent rise in the Forest of Dean (10%). The main reason for this is due to a fall in the number of parishes with evidence of transactions in the Cotswolds (40%) combined with a rise in the Forest of Dean, which has activity in almost half of its parishes. The Vale of Gloucester has remained remarkable stable in terms of the percentage of total land conveyed (39%) and in the percentage of parishes with data (46%). The later thirteenth century saw population levels rise to extreme levels in some parts of England. It is possible that agricultural activity increased in the more marginal areas of Gloucestershire, such as the parishes on the edge of the Forest of Dean, as more land was needed to produce food for this increasing population.

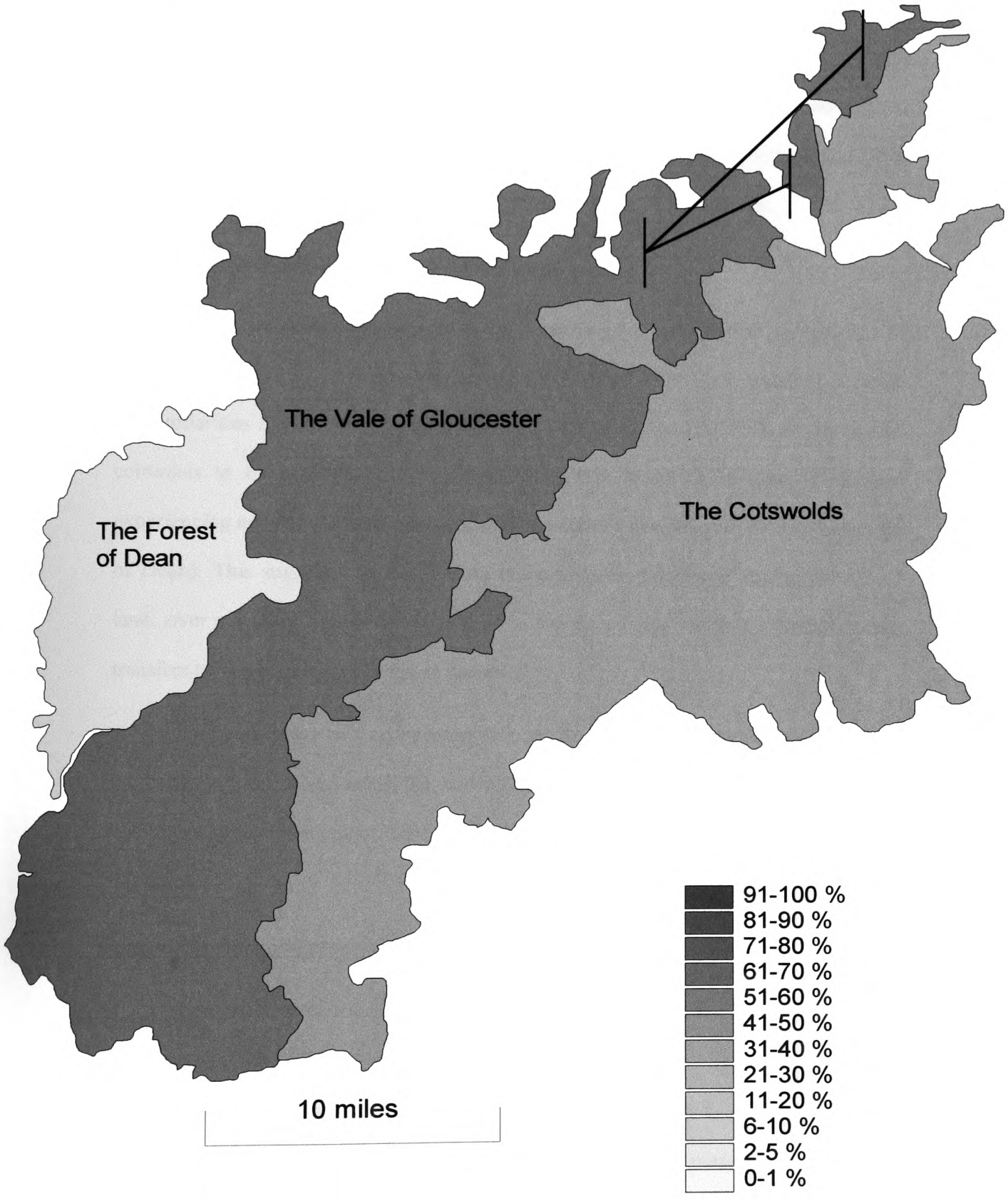
Map G9 Regional percentages, 1303-1352.

There is a large increase in the number of fines issued during this period (see table G2). There is also a major change in the status of the various regions; the Vale of Gloucester is now the most significant region with 55% of the total land transferred in fines occurring in this area. There has been a notable fall, to 40%, in the Cotswolds and a fall to 5% in the Forest of Dean. Almost 63% of the parishes in the Vale have transactions associated with them and despite the fall in the percentage of land transferred in the Forest of Dean and the Cotswolds there has been a slight rise in the percentage of parishes with data in those regions (52% and 44% respectively).

G8: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 11251-1302.



G9: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



This map is interesting because it represents the only period in which the Vale is significantly more dominant than the Cotswolds (it has a slightly higher percentage in the subsequent period showing that it was the most notable region in the fourteenth century as a whole). This indicates a major change in agricultural activity in Gloucestershire in the early fourteenth century. The study of the individual land types transferred in fines will reveal some clues to the reasons for this change.

Map G10: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

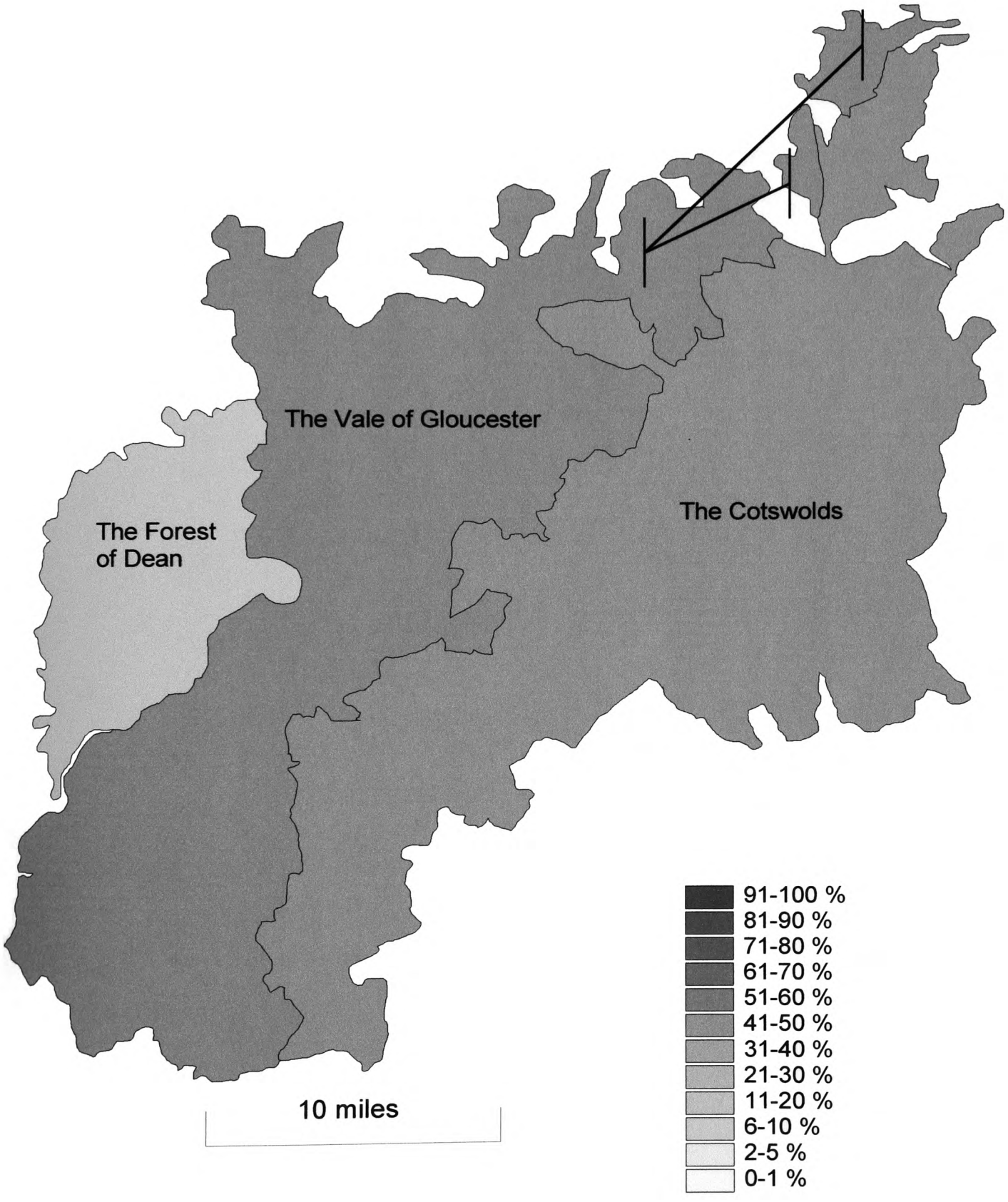
The Vale of Gloucester and the Cotswolds had very similar percentages of land transferred in fines during this period (46.5% and 43.5% respectively). Despite the similarities in percentages between the two major regions the Vale of Gloucester continues to be notably more significant in terms of the percentage of parishes experiencing activity (48% as opposed to 35% in the Cotswolds and 39% in the Forest of Dean). This suggests that there were more transfers involving smaller parcels of land, over a wider area, in the Vale than in the Cotswolds which was experiencing transfers of larger acreages in fewer parishes.

The percentage of land transferred in the Forest of Dean doubled to 10% from the earlier period; considering the size of this region in comparison with the others this figure appears very significant and indicates a very important period of activity in this area.

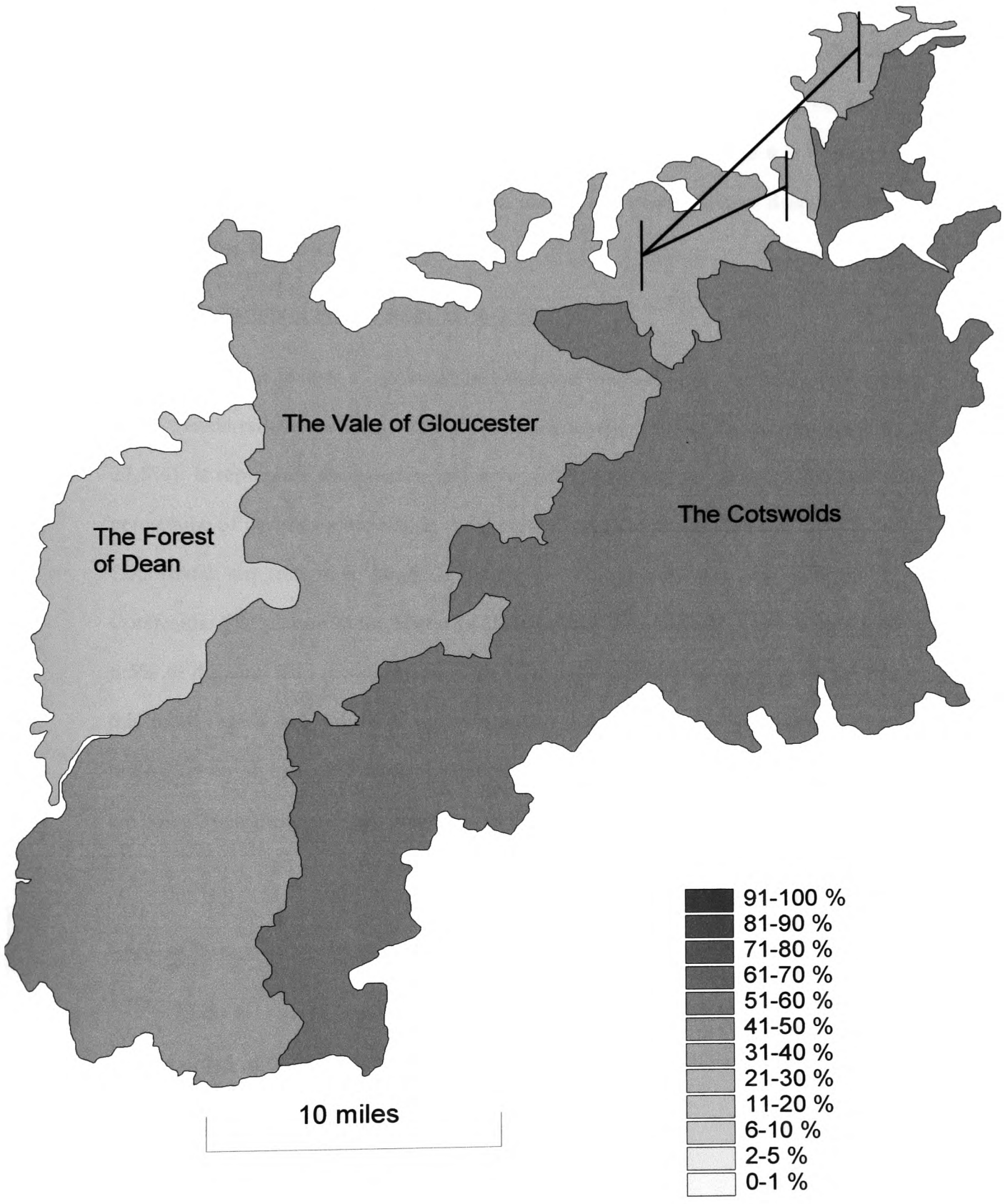
Map G11: Regional percentages, 1405-1455.

This map reveals a situation reminiscent of that apparent in the thirteenth century, with the Cotswolds having a significantly higher percentage of land transferred in fines than the Vale of Gloucester (58% as opposed to 36%). Despite this situation, the Vale has continued to have a significantly higher percentage of parishes

G10: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



G11: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



with records of transfers than the Cotswolds (38% compared to 27%). This is even more pronounced than in the previous period and continues to indicate a growing trend whereby smaller parcels of land are being transferred in a wider area in the Vale than in the Cotswolds. The lower percentage of parishes with data overall in this period is indicative of the fall in the number of fines issued although it is interesting that the Forest of Dean still has data from almost half of its parishes despite having just 6% of the total land recorded.

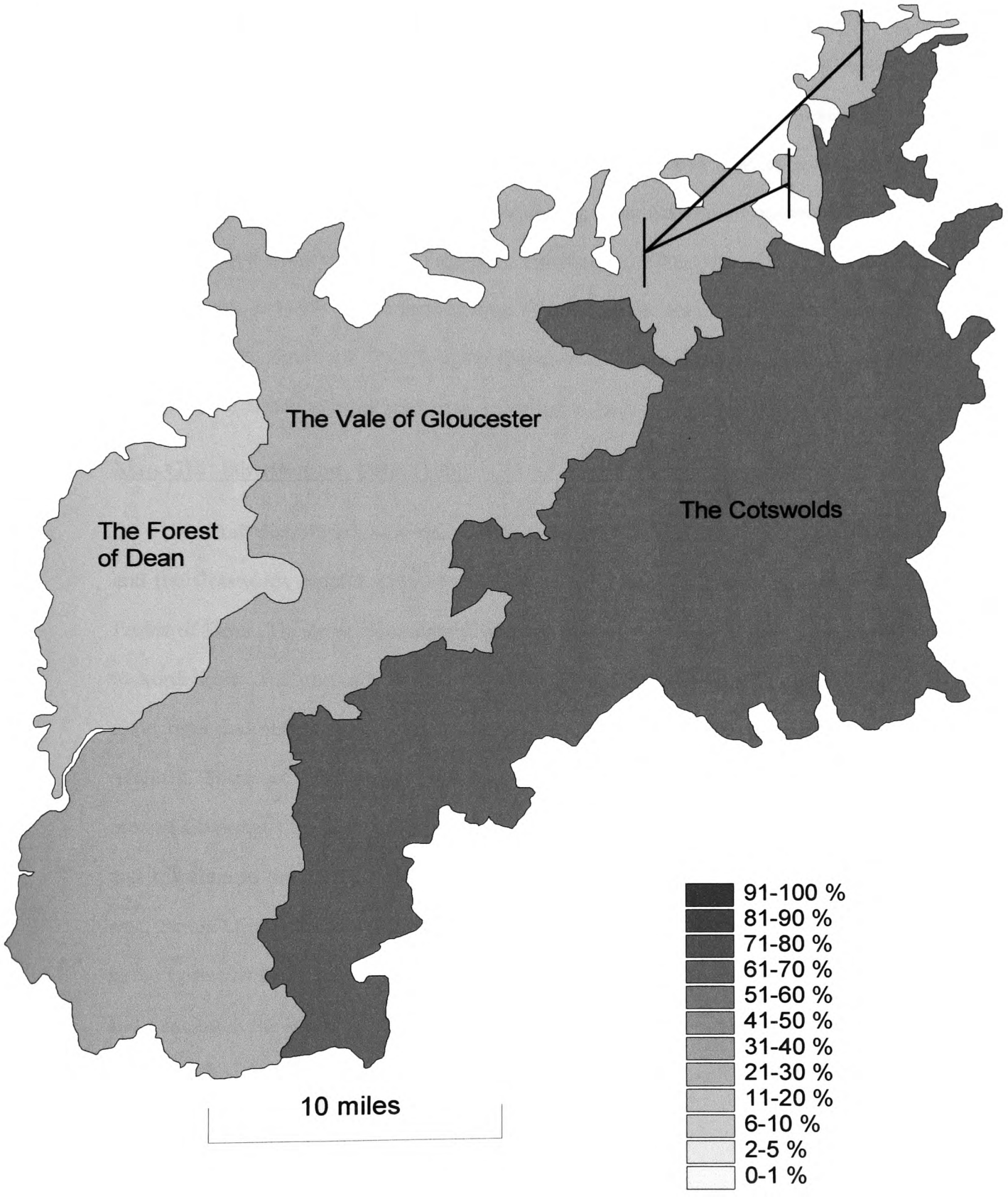
Map G12: Regional percentages, 1456-1508.

This map reveals a continued and massive increase in the amount of all land types transferred in the Cotswolds as opposed to the Vale of Gloucester (66% to 27.5%). It represents the greatest gap between the two regions although the similar percentage of parishes with data in the two regions (32% in the Vale and 38% in the Cotswolds) suggests that larger acreages per fine were more common in the Cotswolds. The picture in the Forest of Dean region has remained very constant with 6.5% of the total land recorded and 52% of its parishes with data. This indicates that this small region was subject to quite intensive activity although the relative size of the region combined with relatively low acreages recorded per document means that the overall percentages of land recorded in this region remain low.

6.6(iii) Changes in arable over time.

Maps G13 to G24 represent the percentages of arable in relation to all other land recorded in fines in each region and the distribution of arable on a sub-regional and parish level.

G12: Regional percentages of total acreages of all types of land recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.



Map G13: Regional percentages, 1199-1250.

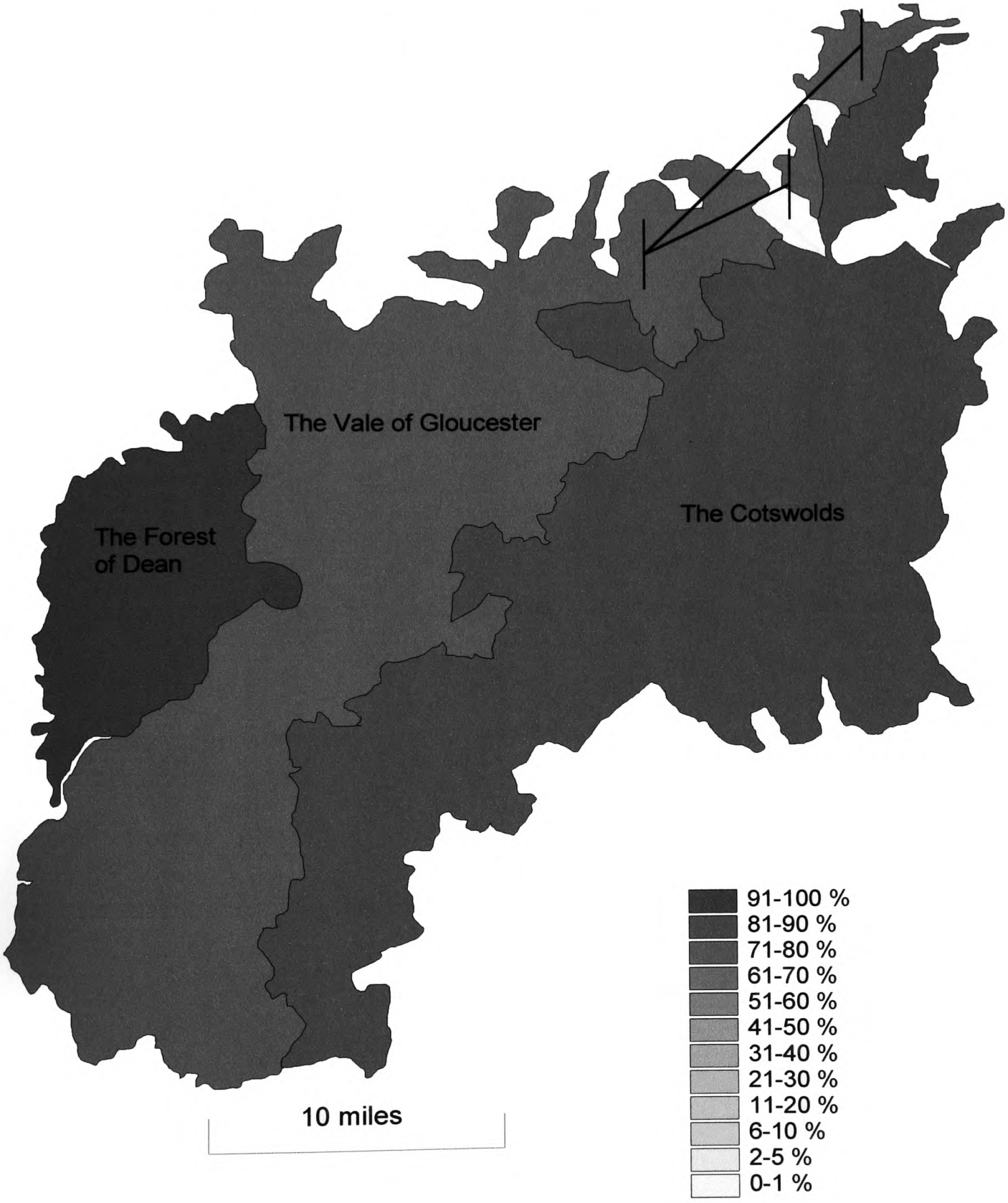
In comparison with Herefordshire and Shropshire there are significantly more fines issued in Gloucestershire during this period. However, the percentages of land types other than arable are very low and the figures of 72% and 81.5%, revealed by this map, for the Vale and Cotswolds respectively are primarily due, as noted in the other counties, to a few abnormal fines mentioning large acreages of unspecified land such as the two Knight's Fees in Sapperton obtained by Gilbert son of Rumbald from Robert Monk in 1199.[132] The lack of fines of this type for the Forest of Dean region means that its figure of 99.5% is, perhaps, more representative of the overall percentage of arable to other land types recorded in fines during this period.

Map G14: Distribution, 1199-1250.

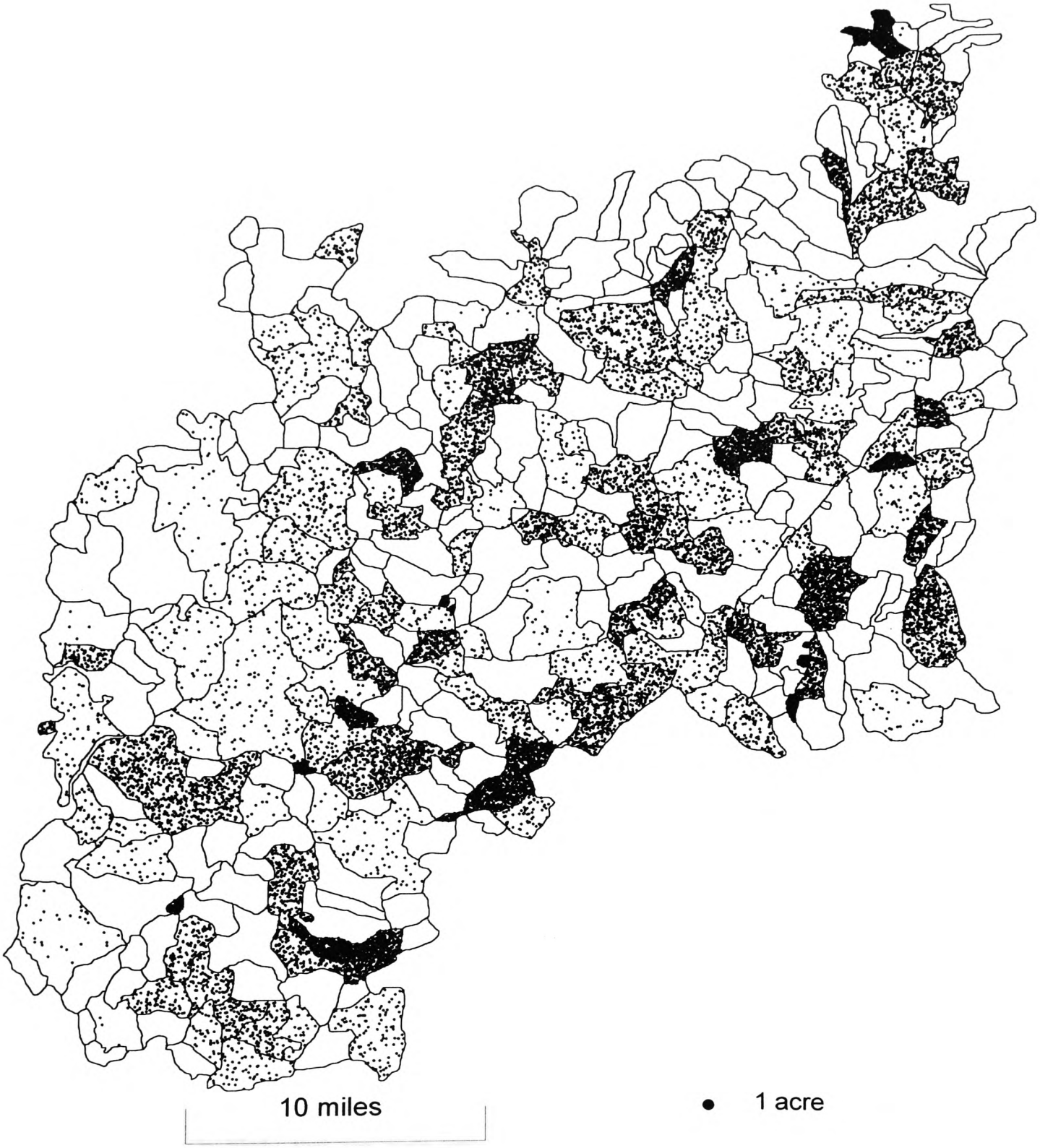
Overall distribution of arable transfers is patchy during this period; in the Vale and the Cotswolds around 45% of the parishes have data compared to 39% in the Forest of Dean. The most significant districts in the Vale are in a band running south to north from Aust through Berkeley to Arlingham, near Minsterworth and around Gloucester and also farther north around Bishops Cleeve and in the extreme north at Welford. There are some notably dense clusters apparent in the Cotswolds. They are around Chipping Campden in the extreme northern edge of the region, near Shipton and Elkstone in the north, at Bibury, Eastleach Turville and Eastleach Martin in the east, around Tetbury and near Doddington in the south. Densities are somewhat thin in the Forest of Dean although there are some reasonable clusters around Hewelsfield and Lancaut in the south.

[132] PRO: CP25/1/73/1/22.

G13: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



G14: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



Map G15: Regional percentages, 1251-1302.

There is a significant rise in the percentages of land types other than arable recorded in fines during this period. Therefore, despite the occurrence of a few fines with unspecified land types, this map provides a slightly clearer picture of land use in Gloucestershire. The map needs to be viewed in conjunction with maps G27 and G39 because they show that the Vale of Gloucester is slightly more significant, in terms of having evidence of the transfer of a variety of land types, than the Cotswolds. On face value this map suggests that the Cotswolds are more significant because it has a lower percentage of arable recorded than the Vale. This is due to a higher degree of unspecified land in the former region. The percentage of arable has fallen slightly in the Forest of Dean which is indicative of a rise in the amount of fines issued mentioning other land types in this region.

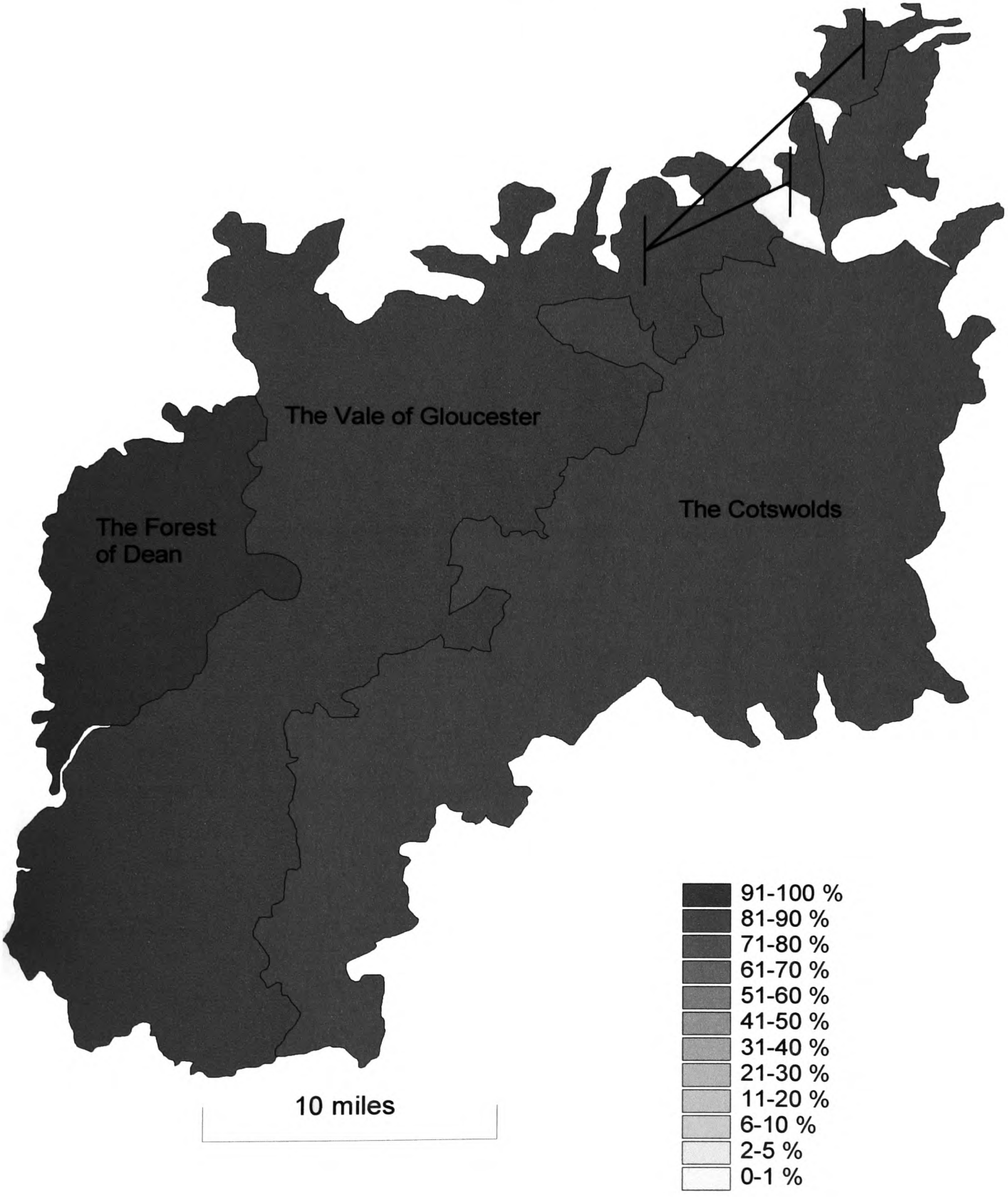
G16: Distribution, 1251-1302.

This map reveals a similar pattern to G14 but there is an obvious expansion in the southern part of the Vale, around the parish of Berkeley. The other significant increase is in the western part of the Forest of Dean. Overall, the southern Vale and the eastern part of the Cotswolds stand out as the most significant districts of arable transfers in this period.

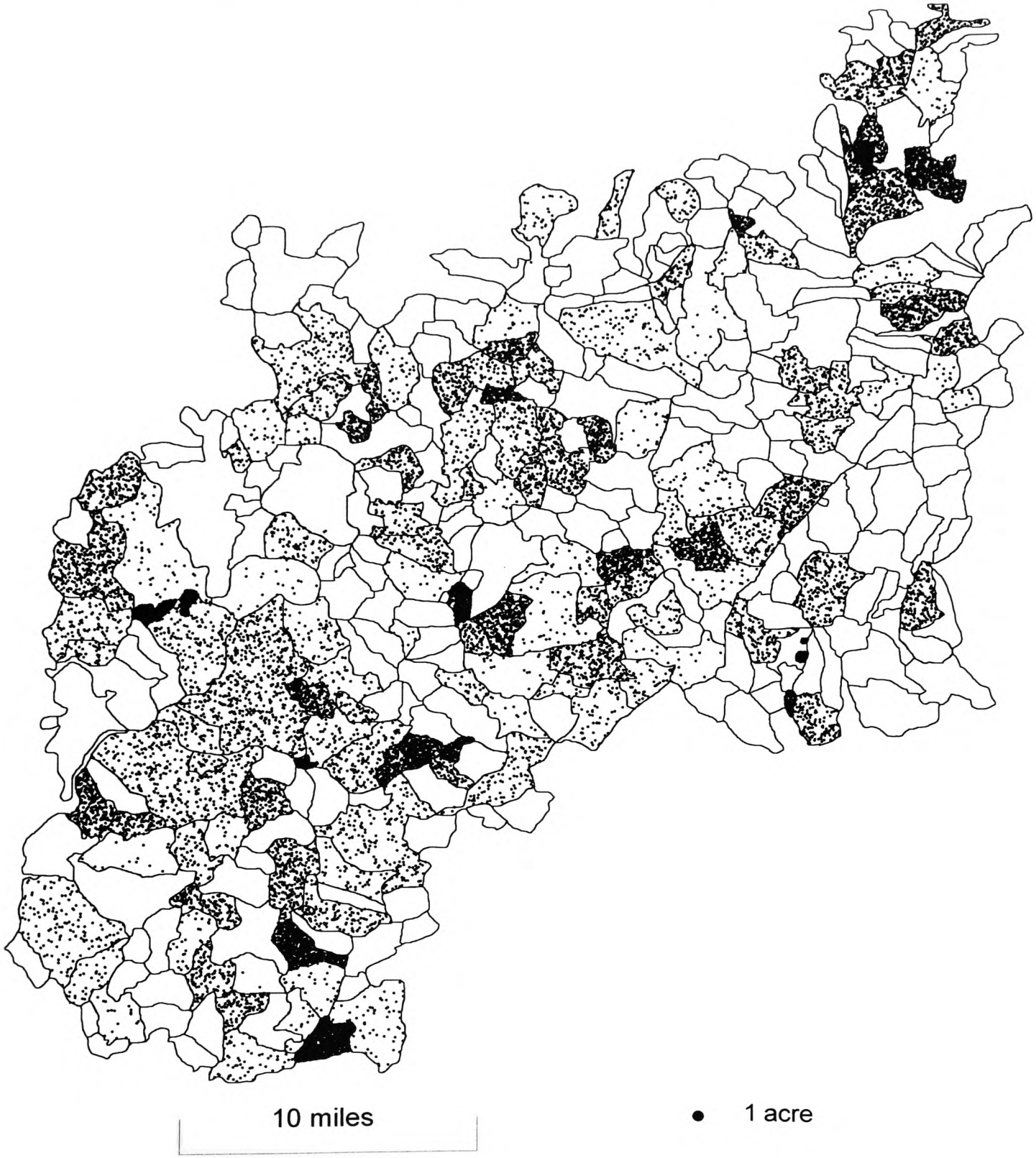
Map G17: Regional percentages, 1303-1352.

There is a massive increase in the number of fines which mention meadow and, to a lesser extent, pasture during this period (see table G3). This fact has influenced this map most notably in the Vale of Gloucester; the lower percentage of arable recorded in the Vale in comparison with the other regions is due to this increase. It is likely that the Vale was the most densely populated region of

G15: Regional percentages arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



G16: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



Gloucestershire during the early Middle Ages.[133] Finberg has suggested that the Vale was the first region to experience a contraction of arable in the mid fourteenth century.[134] A fall in the population of the Vale as a result of the famine may have led to a rise in more mixed farming methods.

Overall, the very high percentages of arable apparent in Gloucestershire throughout the fourteenth century seems to correspond with Dyer's belief that, despite the advance of pastoralism following agricultural decline in the fourteenth century, the counties of the West Midlands retained their "basis in arable production."[135]

Map G18: Distribution, 1303-1352.

The most significant district of activity suggested by this map is in the extreme northeast of the county near Weston-Sub-Edge and in the Vale around Staverton and Down Hatherley. Distribution of arable is widest in the Vale with a more or less continuous stretch running south from Wormington in the north through Gloucester and Berkeley to Shirehampton. This distribution is thinner in the northern part of the Cotswolds and is limited to a few parishes around Longborough and Chipping Campden. There is a significant band running east to west between Bibury and Bisley in the middle of the Cotswolds. Records of arable are reasonably widespread in the Forest of Dean with particularly dense pockets around Newland.

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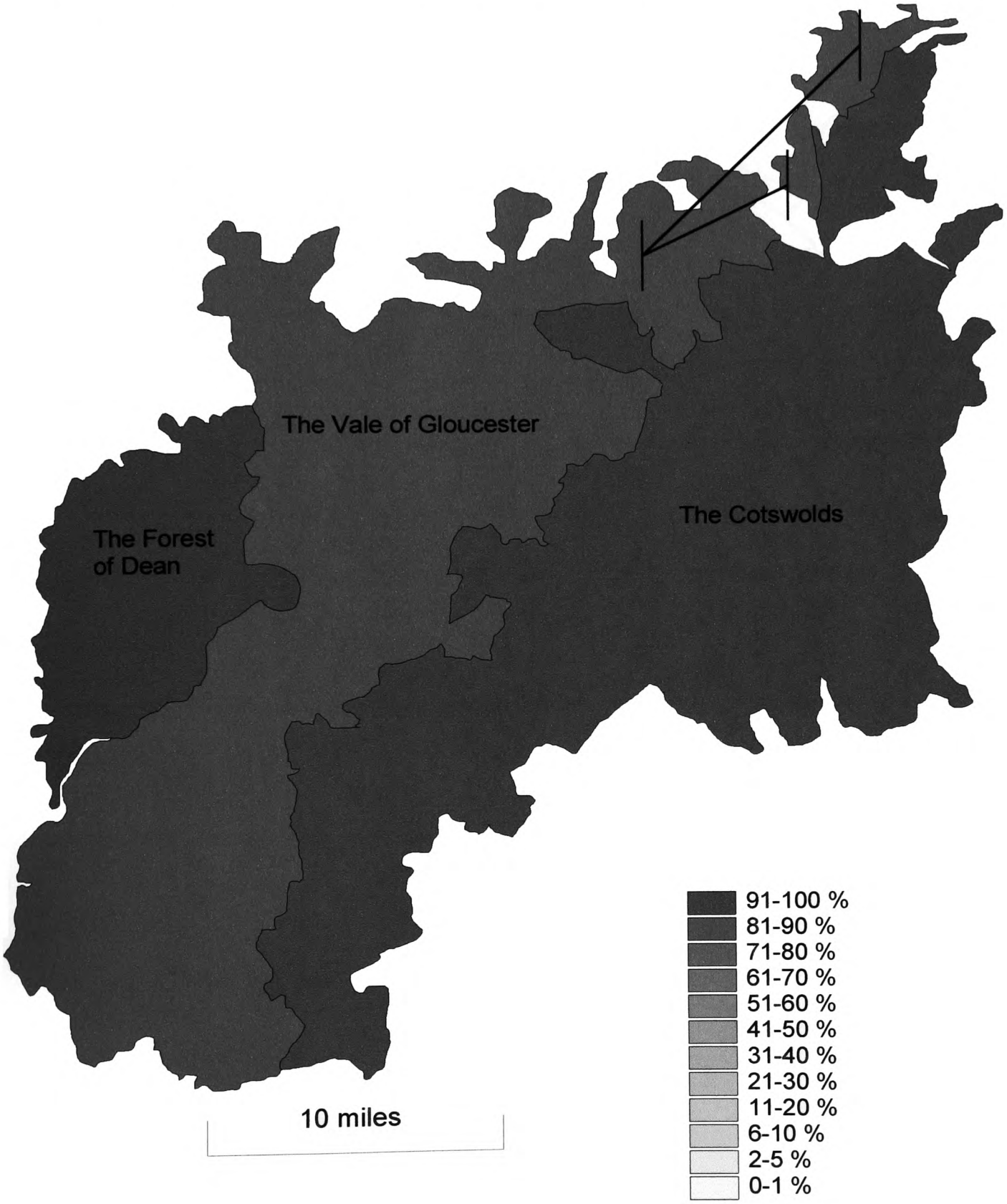
[133] Dyer, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, pp. 226.

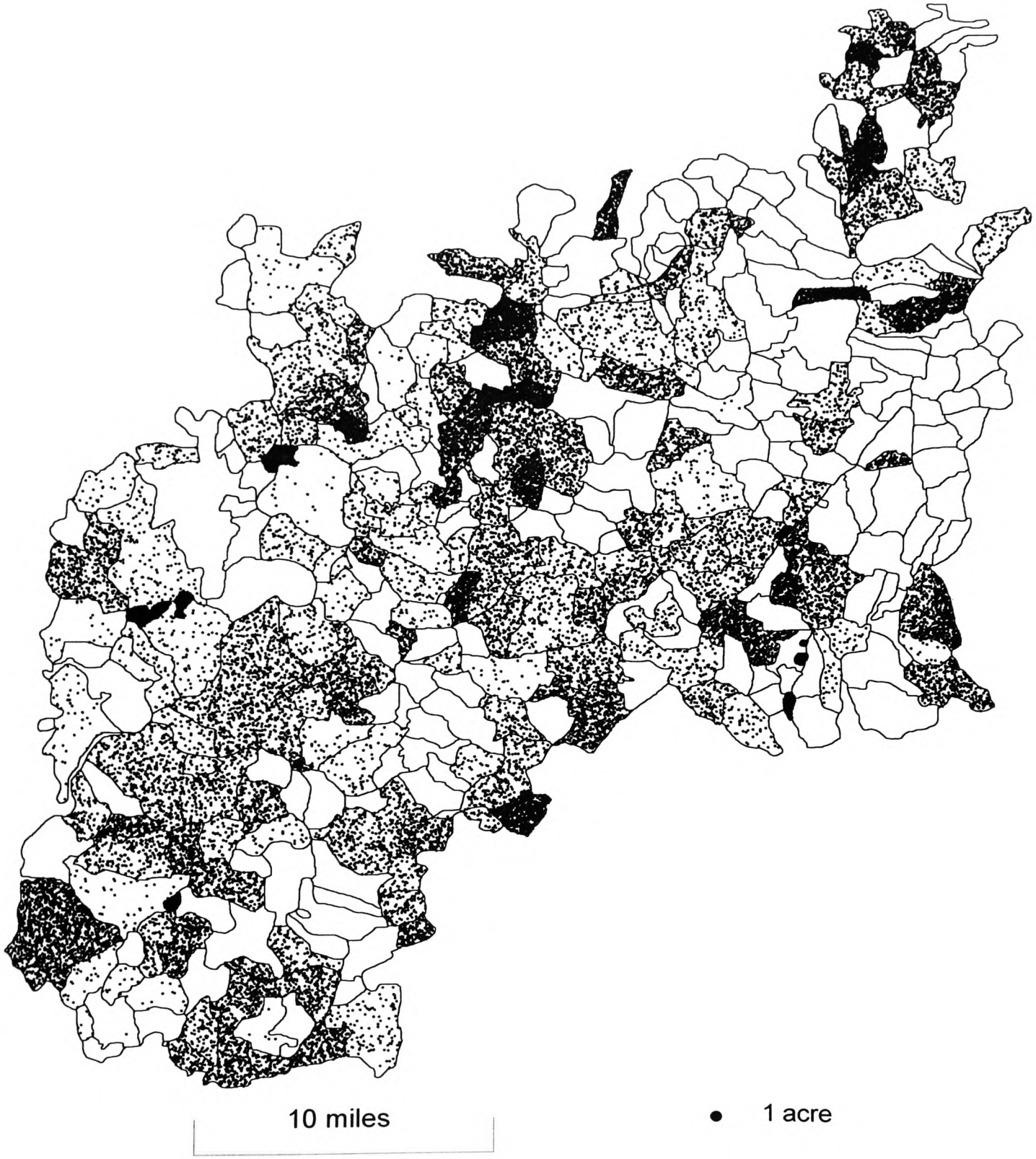
[134] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

[135] Dyer, 'Farming Practices and Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 222.

G17: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



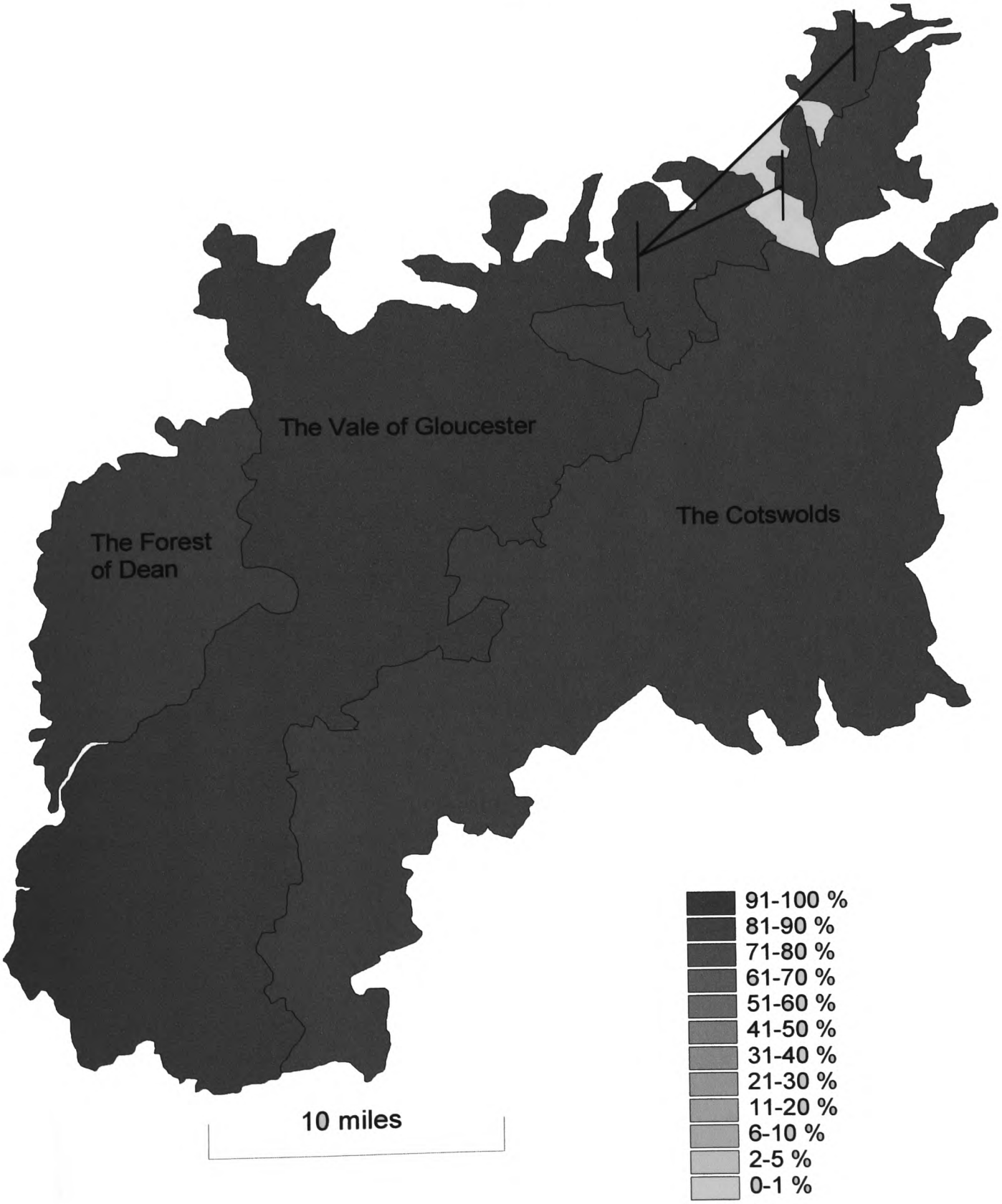
G18: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



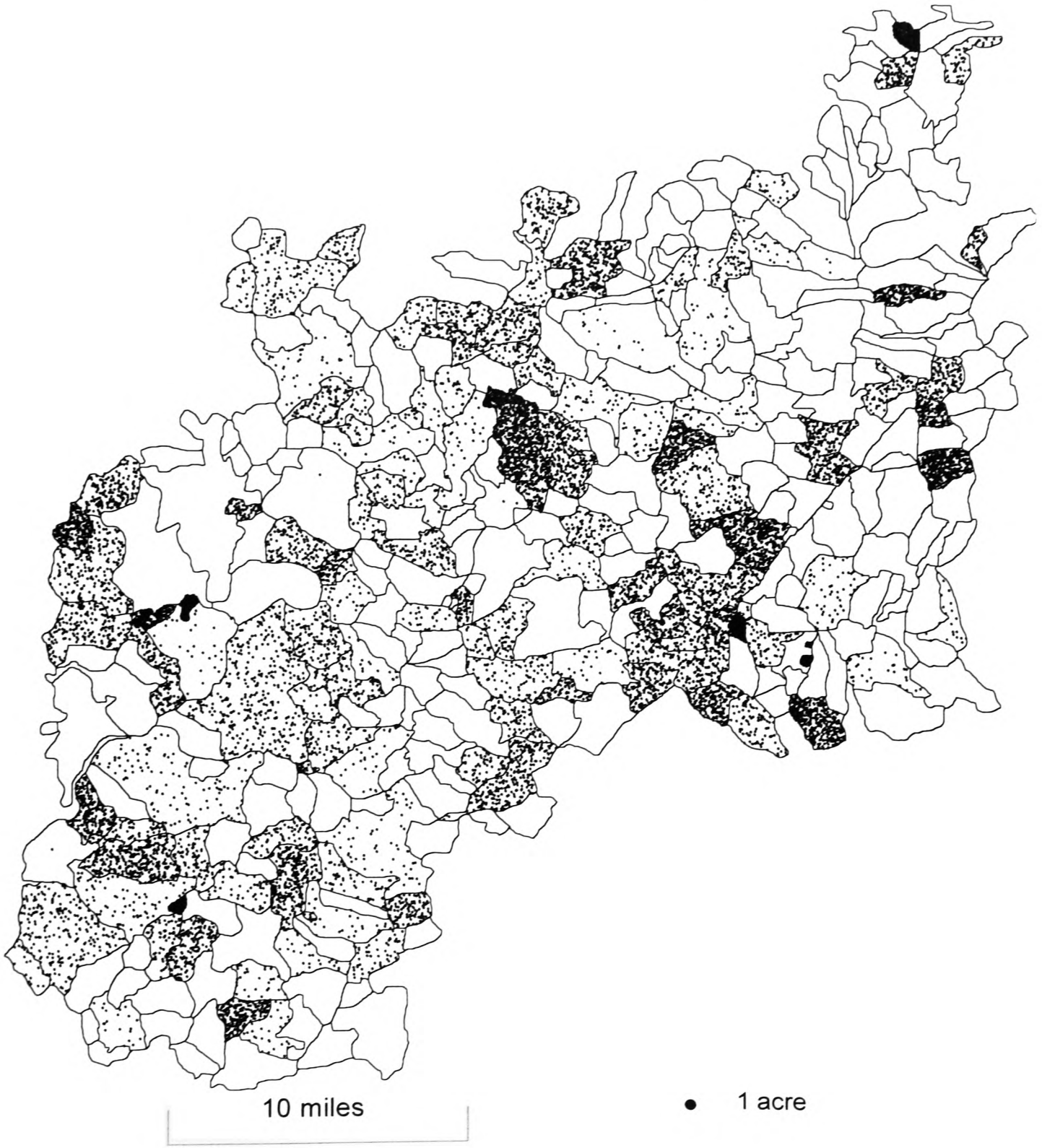
Map G19: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

There is an overall fall in the percentage of arable recorded on a countywide basis. This is linked to a rise in the percentage of fines with records of meadow and pasture; despite a massive fall in the number of fines issued (see table G3) there has been an increase in records of meadow in the documents from 55% in the previous period to 62.5% and a subsequent rise in records of pasture from 12% to 15%. This suggests that the change apparent in the Vale of Gloucester in the first half of the fourteenth century was now taking place on a countywide basis. The suggestion that the Vale was the first region to react to the upheavals of the early fourteenth century is, perhaps, indicated here by the fact that the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean both have the same percentage of arable transfers (82%) whereas the Vale has a slightly higher figure (87%); although the percentage of meadow and pasture has increased in the Vale, it has increased more dramatically in the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean. As noted in relation to map G10 above overall activity was still most apparent in the Vale although there is a noticeable difference in the size of acreages transferred per document in the Vale and in the Cotswolds. This may be indicative of a change in the structure of agriculture in the Vale in the fourteenth century; it is possible that arable production was now occurring on much smaller holdings in the Vale whereas the Cotswolds region was developing its status as an important wool producing area. This change in the Vale could be seen as a part of the process which spelled the end of the age of medieval high farming in England.

G19: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



G20: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



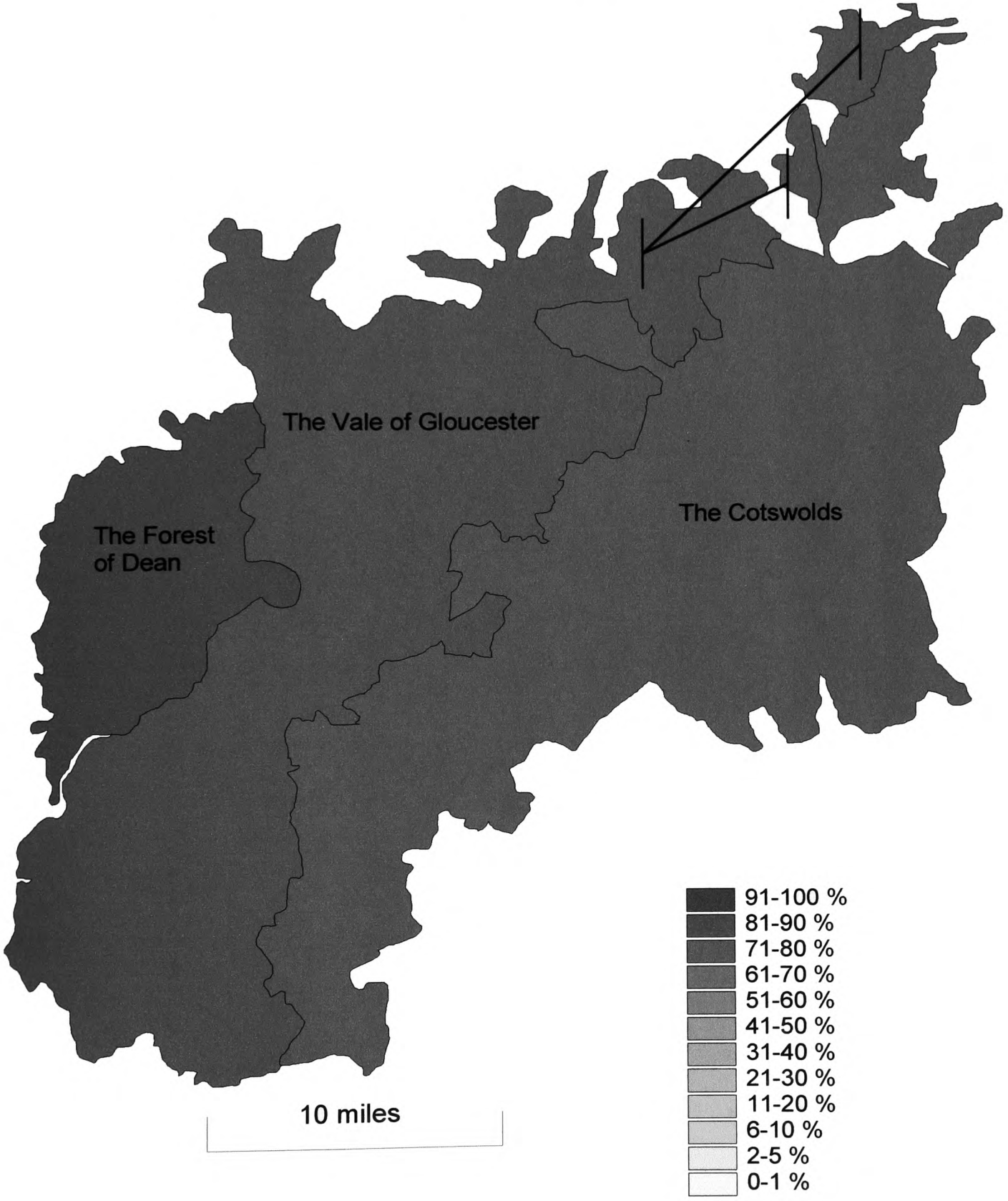
G20: Distribution, 1353-1404.

Overall distribution has fallen noticeably. This is due, in part, to the massive fall in the number of fines issued compared to the earlier periods (see table G3 above). Districts, rather than regions, have developed in importance although the Vale probably maintains its prominence as the premier arable region because of the relatively unbroken run of parishes, with some evidence of arable transfers, from north to south. The group of parishes around Berkeley and Henbury in the south and around Churchdown in the north have the most significant clusters. In the Cotswolds, a group of parishes, in a relatively low-lying district near the Coln and Churn valleys, has emerged as an important district of arable transactions. In Dean, the southwest, around Newland has continued to reveal transfers of significant arable acreages. A rare glimpse into the interior of this region is provide by a fine of this period; in 1429, Thomas Wodeward obtained a messuage and the moiety of an acre of arable in Magna Dean (West Dean) from William Sherbourne and his wife Elizabeth. This fine may indicate that small parcels of arable, attached to messuages, were used in the heavily wooded areas to grow some crops, mainly for family use.

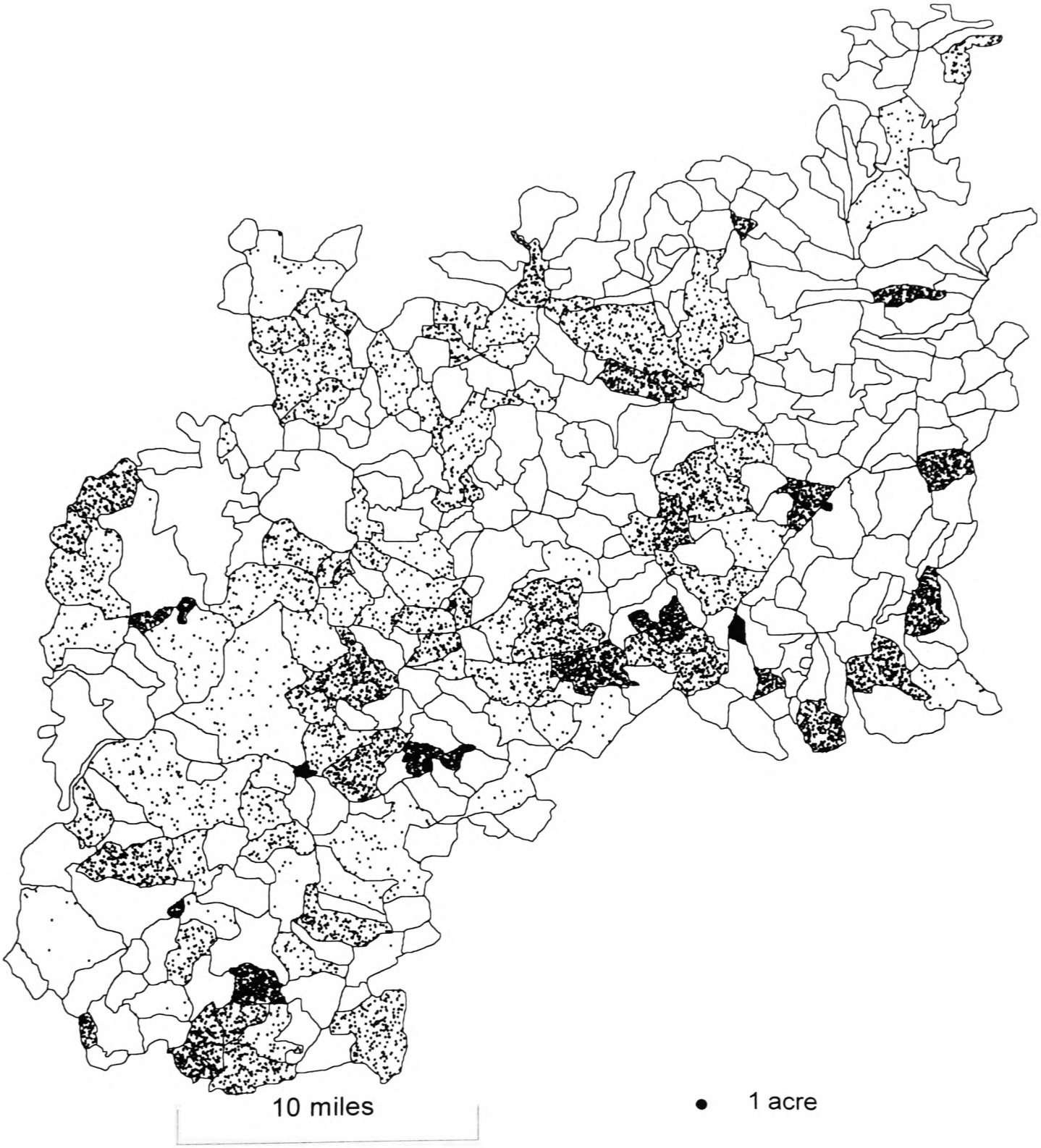
Map G21: Regional percentages, 1405-1455.

There is a continued fall in the overall percentage of arable recorded in fines during this period. This is most apparent in the Cotswolds and is mainly due to a continued rise in the amount of meadow and pasture recorded in the fines. What is particularly interesting in this period is the rise in the percentage of pasture (as distinct from meadow). This will be discussed in relation to maps G33 and G34 below. The rise in transfers of this land type seems indicative of the development of certain

G21: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



G22: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



districts of Gloucestershire (particularly in the Cotswolds region) as primary wool producing areas supplying England's expanding textile industry.

Map G22: Distribution, 1405-1455.

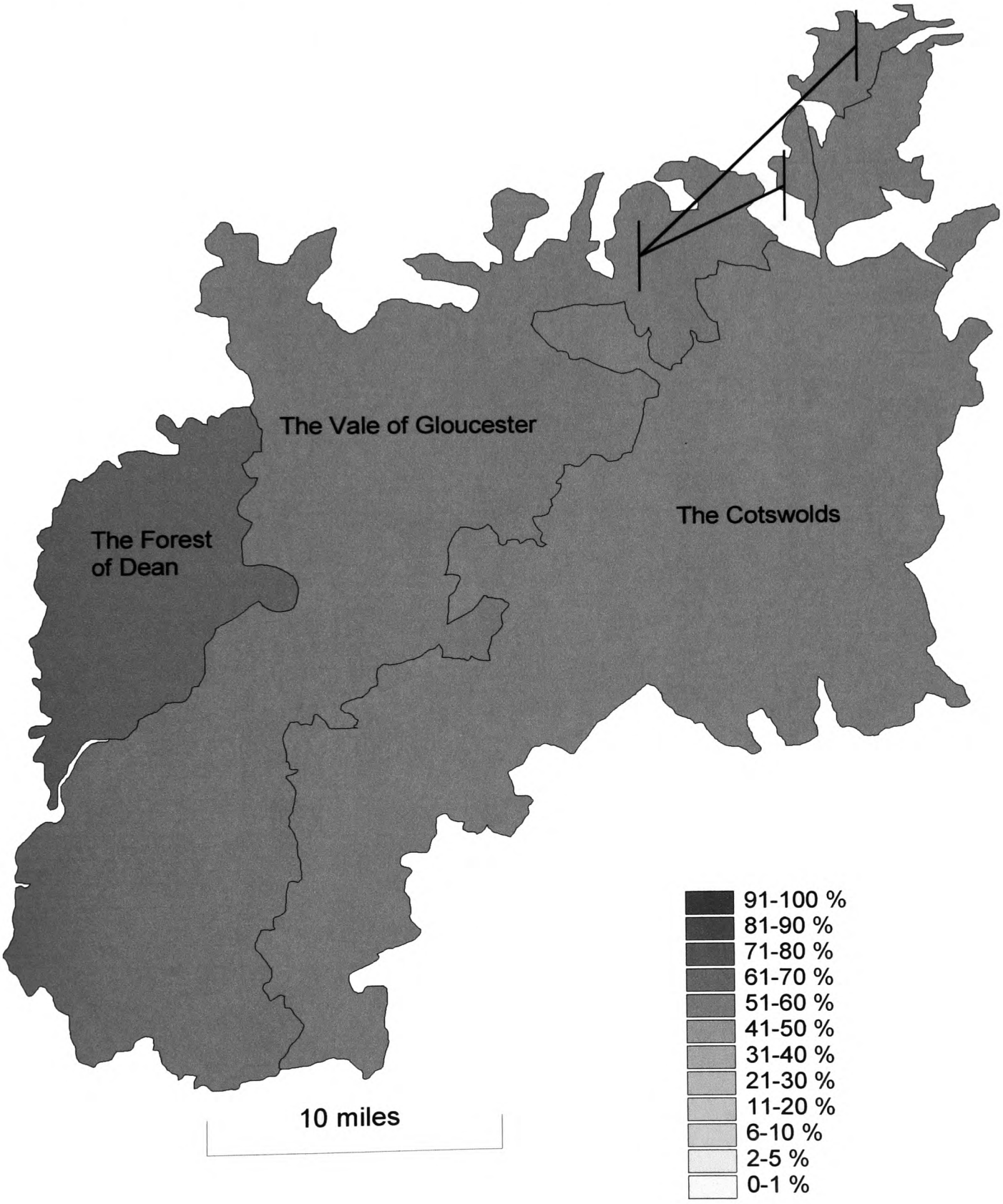
This map reveals further fragmentation. Records of arable in the Vale are primarily centred on Berkeley and its neighbouring parishes, with another smaller area of activity around Tewkesbury. In the middle of the Cotswolds, there is another group of significant parishes encompassing Withington, Bibury and Cirencester (between the valleys of the Coln and Churn). In the south of the county there is a reasonable cluster around Pucklechurch. In Dean there is a large gap, represented by West and East Dean, and a small grouping of arable transfers around English Bicknor and Newland.

Map G23: Regional percentages, 1456-1508.

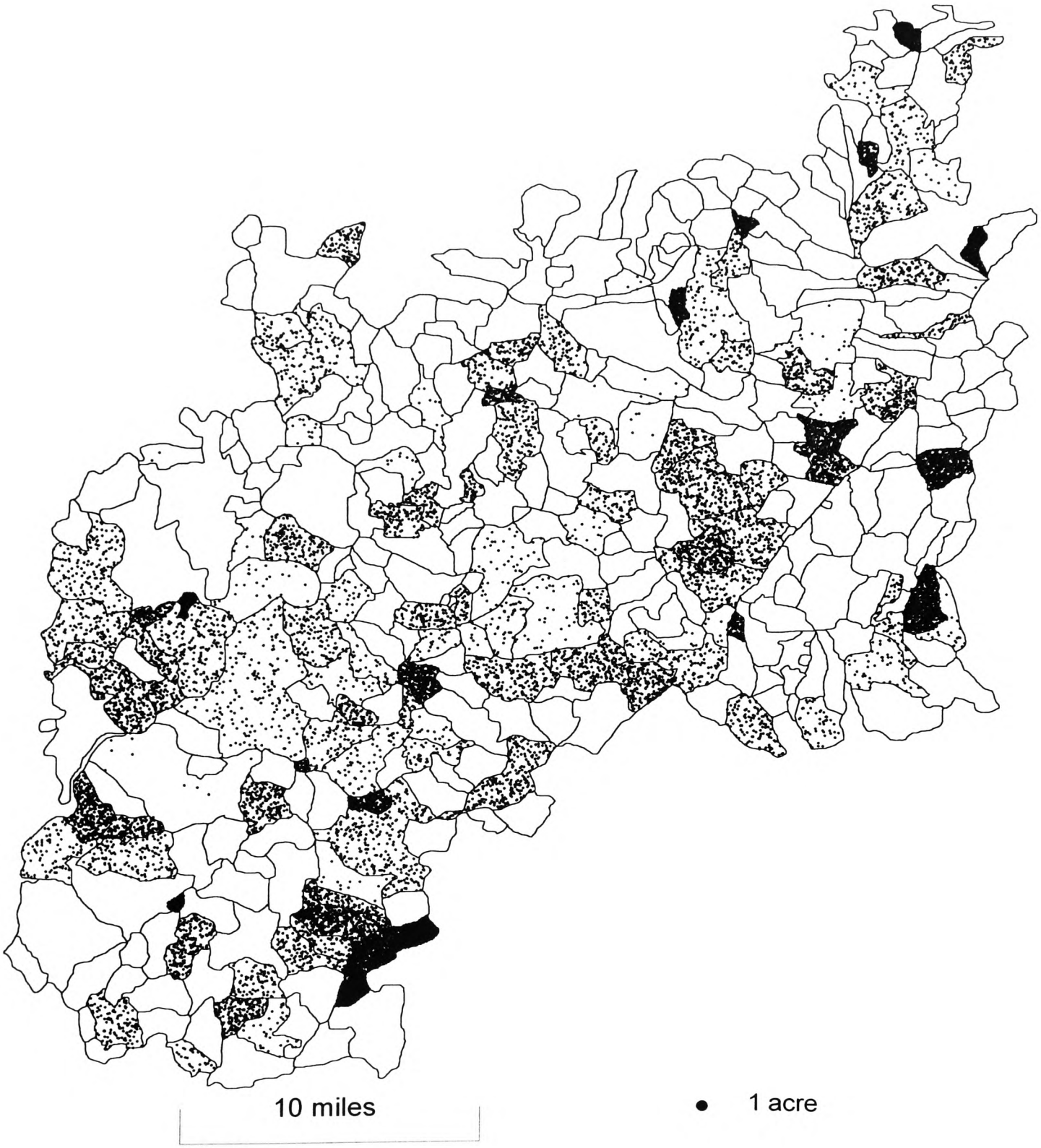
There has been a continued fall in the percentage of arable transferred. The subsequent rise in transfers of meadow and pasture been most notable in the Vale, which now rivals the Cotswolds in terms of the percentage of those land types, recorded. It is likely that the success of the Cotswold's wool industry influenced farmers in the Vale and this, combined with a general fall in the importance of arable farming, led to the decline noticeable in the late fifteenth century.

The relatively high percentage of arable recorded in the Forest of Dean is indicative of a situation that has been apparent in the evidence from fines for the whole period, 1199-1508. This needs explaining because it is obvious that this region was not the most important arable district of Gloucestershire. Some clues will become apparent when the maps relating to the other land types are discussed. The Forest of Dean had a very distinctive economy during the Middle Ages and it seems to have

G23: Regional percentages of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.



G24: Distribution of arable recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.



developed independently from the rest of the county (see section 6.1 above). Much of the region was a Royal Forest and was subject to Forest Law, a factor that would have inhibited settlement. Fines were more rarely issued in relation to this region (see map G6 above) and it is likely that there were other methods of transfer that were more appropriate in the Forest. When fines were used to transfer land there they usually mentioned arable. Therefore, a single fine issued in relation to one village can have a big influence on the overall percentage of arable on a regional level.

Map G24: Distribution, 1456-1508.

This map reveals a very fragmented picture with the most significant district of arable transfers crossing all three regions from Newland in the west through Berkeley and Nympsfield towards Cirencester in the east. This grouping joins up with a series of Cotswold parishes farther north around Withington. There are some very dense small clusters that are due to large acreages transferred in individual fines during this period. These clusters are primarily apparent in the Cotswolds, in the south around Tormarton, in the east near Eastleach Turville and Great Rissington and in the north around Lemington.

6.6(iv) Changes in meadow and pasture over time.

Hilton has commented on the importance and scarcity of meadow in medieval England, with particular reference to the West Midlands. He says:

> "A holding consisting only of arable land was not viable under medieval conditions. Peasant holdings needed draught animals at least, and draught animals had to be fed. Therefore each peasant holding, in addition to the arable, had a share of meadow land, and of pasture, both on the fallow and on

the rough grazing. Meadow was scarce. There were no sown meadows in medieval England, so they were the natural product of rivers and streams."[136]

Hilton goes on to say that "low meadow acreages were characteristic of the Cotswolds."[137] The distinction between meadow and pasture is worth noting here because although both land types provide evidence of pastoral farming the Vale has more of a propensity towards meadow because of the extensive flood plains of the Severn. The highest percentages of meadow transferred in fines occur in the Vale and it seems likely that this region was used more extensively for dairying and for the cultivation of winter feeds than the Cotswolds where records of pasture are likely to be mainly indicative of sheep husbandry although valleys such as the Cam and Coaley did have extensive meadows and were capable of supporting large cattle herds.[138]

Map G25: Regional percentages, 1199-1250.

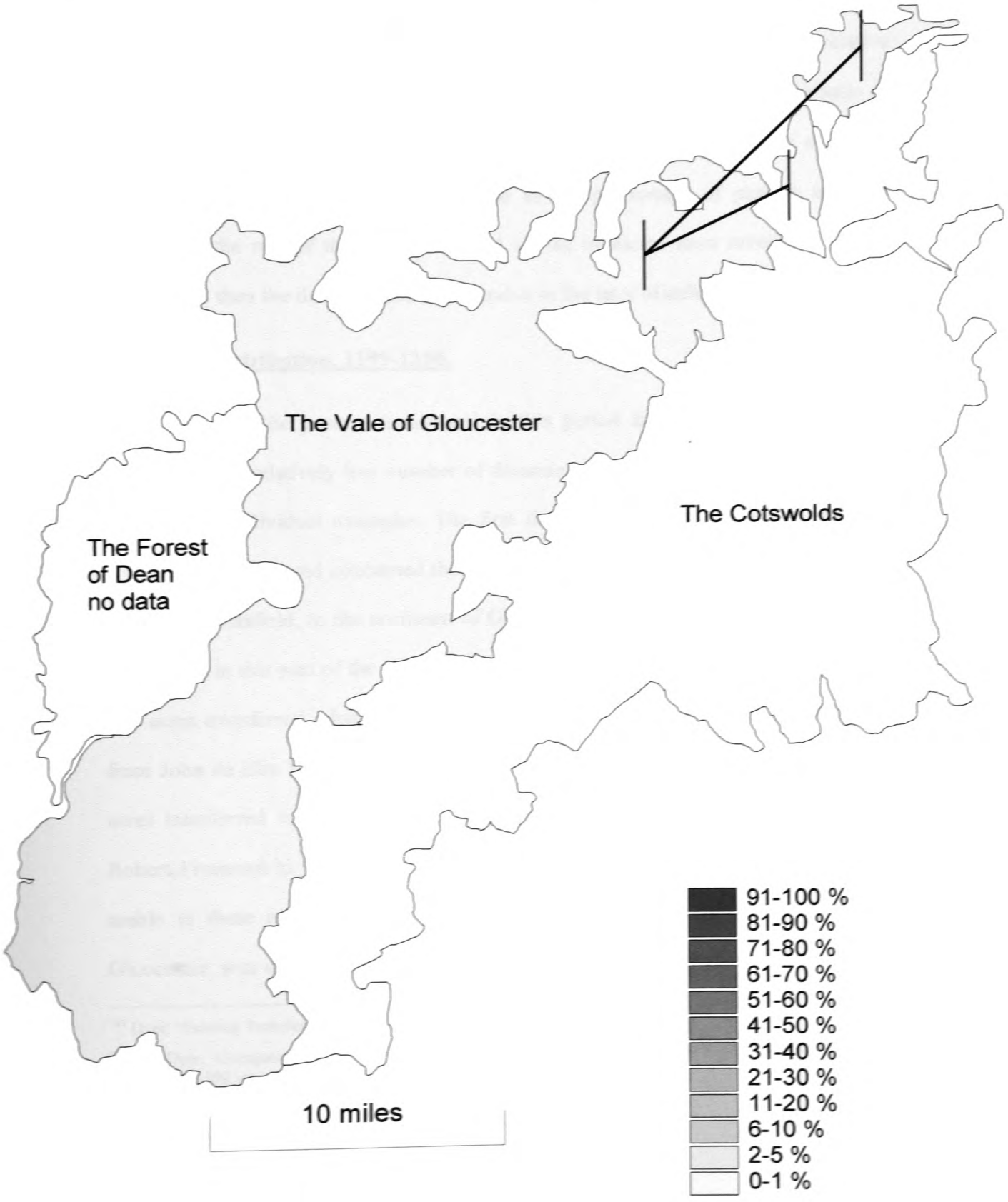
There are considerably more fines that mention meadow during this period than there are for Herefordshire and Shropshire. In relation to the total amount of land transferred this still represents a very low percentage; the Forest of Dean has no data for any type of pasture land and the Vale and the Cotswolds have figures well under 1%. When these land types are compared to the amount of arable transferred there is little to choose between the Vale and the Cotswolds in terms of the relative importance of pasture; the Vale has a figure of 0.3% and the Cotswolds 0.2%. Pasture would have been an important commodity in Gloucestershire during this period and the occasional transfers, discussed in relation to map G26 below, indicate that fines were used as a method for its conveyance. It is possible that the frequent recording of

[136] Hilton, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 117. See also: Harvey, 'Domesday England', *op. cit.*, p. 122.

[138] Harvey, 'Domesday England', *op. cit.*, p. 122; Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 375-376.

G25: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



arable along with "appurtenances" in fines is indicative of rights to meadow and pasture, mentioned in a similar way to that recognized by Dyer in his examination of charters and surveys for the West Midlands.[139] Therefore, although the relative percentages indicated by fines are unlikely to be representative of the exact ratio of pasture to arable during this period,[140] they do indicate the dominance of arable farming. Furthermore, the continuous rise in the percentage of pasture apparent throughout the rest of the period covered by the medieval fines reveals firstly the gradual and then the dramatic decline in arable in the later Middle Ages.

Map G26: Distribution, 1199-1250.

Most of the pasture transferred in this period is in the form of meadow. Because of the relatively low number of documents involved it is worth considering some of the individual examples. The first fine to mention meadow was issued in Gloucester in 1199 and concerned the transfer of ten acres of arable and four acres of meadow in Hasfield, to the northeast of Gloucester.[141] There is an interesting cluster of parishes in this part of the Vale of Gloucester with records of meadow such as the five acres transferred, along with a virgate of arable, in Elm Bridge (Up Hatherley), from John de Elm Bridge to William Bannchery, in 1235 [142] and the two and a half acres transferred in Tewkesbury in 1240, along with three acres of arable, from Robert Fromond to William de Suwick.[143] As can be seen, the ratio of meadow to arable in these individual fines is quite high. Indeed, in 1240 a fine, issued in Gloucester, was used to transfer three acres of meadow and nothing else in Upleadon

[139] Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 369.

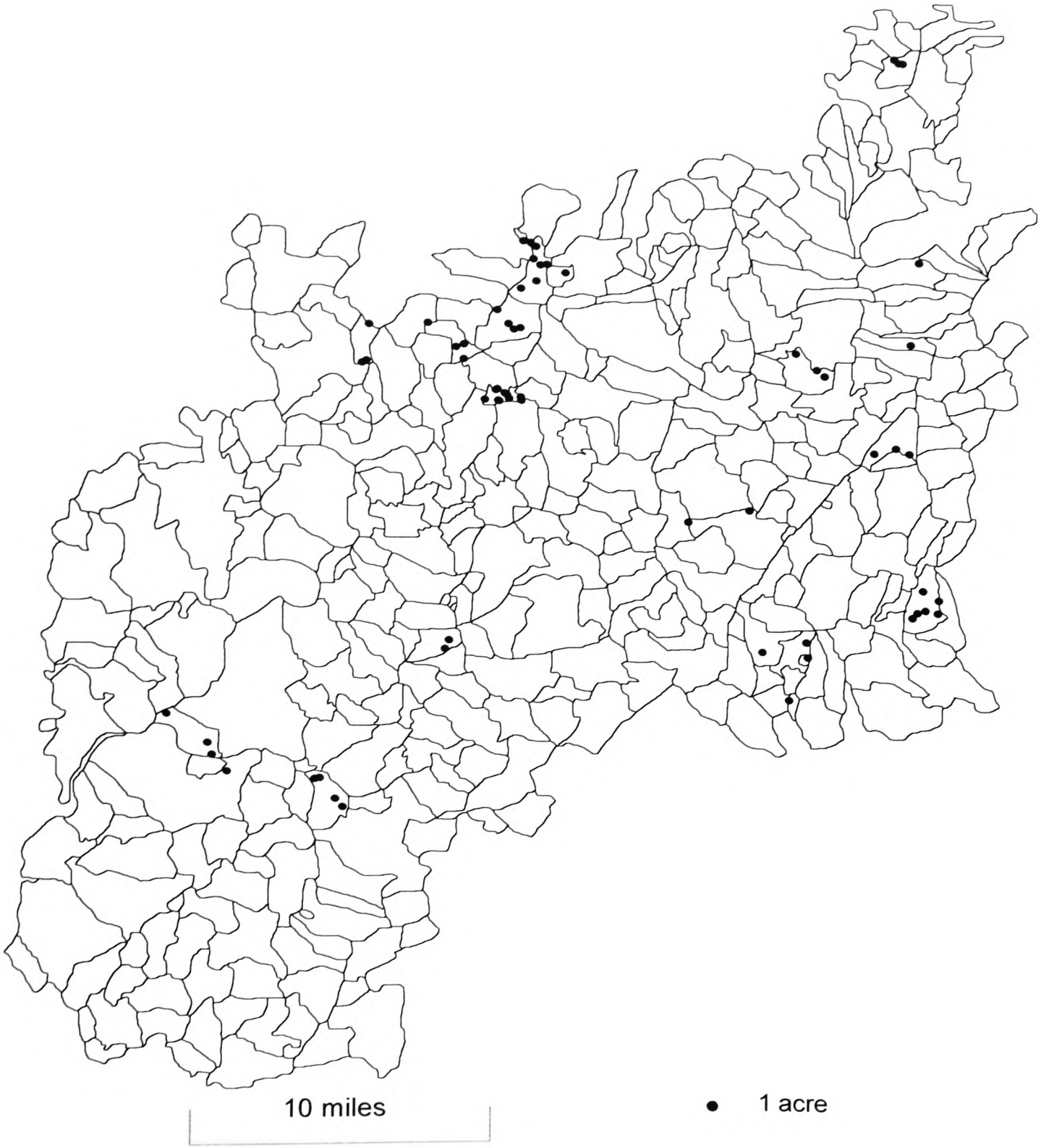
[140] See: Dyer, 'Occupation of the Land: The West Midlands', *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol. III, *1348-1500, op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

[141] PRO: CP25/1/73/1/11.

[142] PRO: CP25/1/73/10/164.

[143] PRO: CP25/1/73/13/241.

G26: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1250.



from Robert de Leadon to Robert de la Mare.[144] Similarly, the William de Suwick, mentioned above, who obtained two and a half acres of meadow in 1240, gained another four acres in Tewkesbury from Robert, the abbot of Tewkesbury, in 1245. The information is recorded in a document in which meadow is the only land transferred.[145] Furthermore, in that same year the same William de Suwick obtained half an acre of meadow in Walton Cardiff (adjacent to Tewkesbury) from Emelina, the daughter of Richard de Haydon.[146] The fact that a certain individual was making a decision to obtain meadow in a particular area from a selection of sources is interesting and shows how study of individual fines can be enlightening. There are further examples of documents, linked with the Tewkesbury district in this period, that record transfers of meadow only, such as the four acres transferred in Apperley (Deerhurst) in 1247 from Robert de Elinourere to Henry Mustel.[147]

When the data from the fines that mention transfers of meadow in the vicinity of Tewkesbury in this period are analysed in terms of the overall percentage of meadow in relation to arable the figure is around 30%. It is clear, therefore, that the Tewkesbury district was very important in terms of wetland pastures during this period. The other areas with records of meadow are sparsely distributed and are primarily in single documents associated with individual parishes and with little evidence of a pattern except that most appear in the east of the Cotswolds region.

There are some examples of important tracts of pasture, of unspecified acreage, mentioned during this period. For example, in 1223, Thomas, the abbot of Kingswood, through his attorney at Westminster, the monk John la Ware, obtained a

[144] PRO: CP25/1/73/14/254.

[145] PRO: CP25/1/73/16/319.

[146] PRO: CP25/1/73/16/320.

[147] PRO: CP25/1/74/17/346.

messuage, a croft, 12 acres of arable, three acres of meadow and pasture for 200 sheep and eight cows in Kingswood, from John de Acton. The fine also mentions a field name associated with the transaction – Langeruding.[148] Also, in 1225, Thomas, the abbot of Gloucester, through his attorney, Henry le Bel, obtained an agreement from the attorneys, Geoffrey de Seinteis and Roger Walense, acting on behalf of William de Pontdelarche and his wife Margia, for the transfer of the Pasture of Morton along with the rights to two cartloads of manure per year from an area of meadow in Morton which was regarded as common land.[149] These documents reveal the importance of pastoral farming to the monastic houses. Hilton and Dyer have commented on the importance of the role of the Church in pastoral farming and particularly the Gloucestershire wool industry.[150]

Map G27: Regional percentages, 1251-1302.

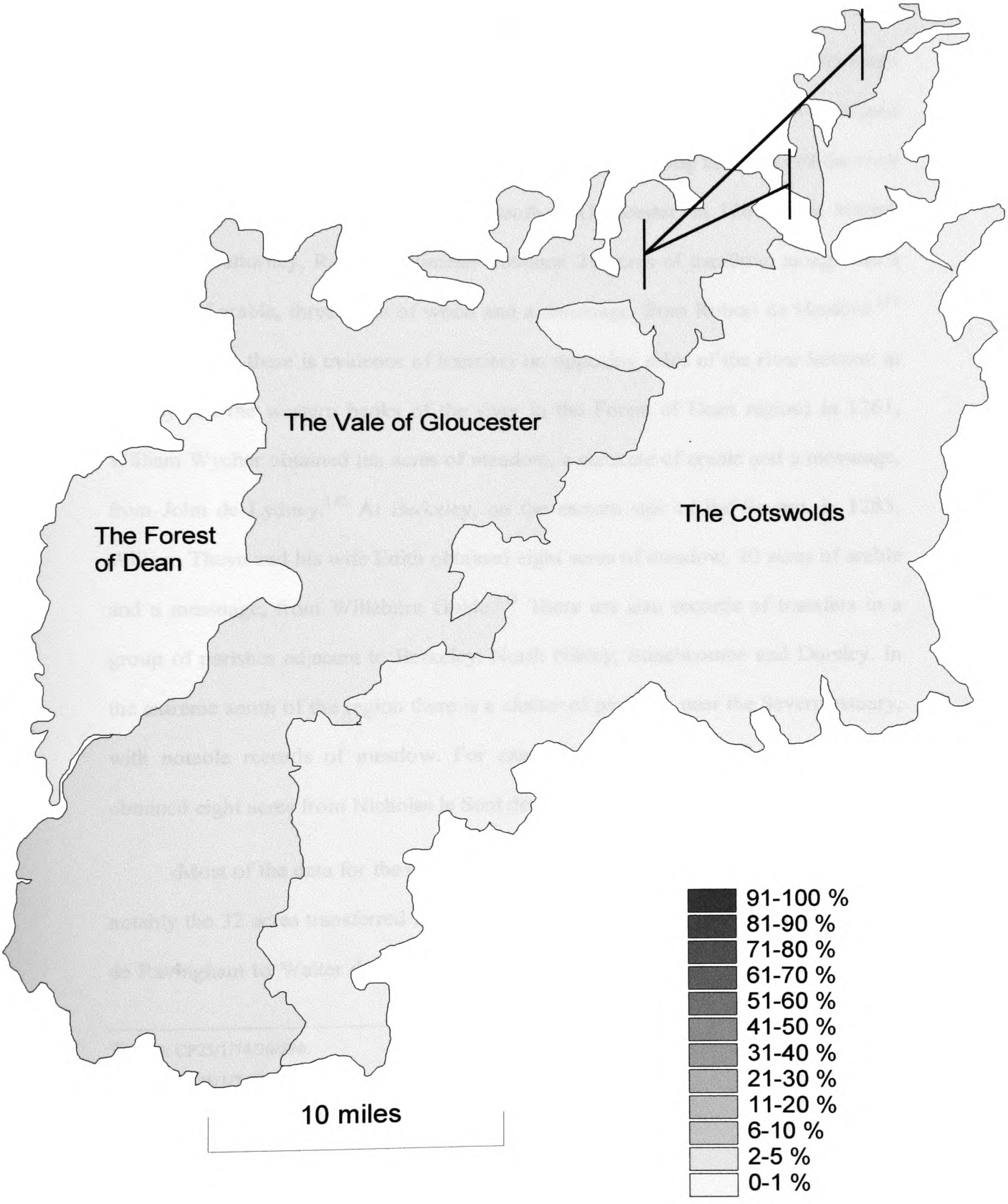
Transfers of meadow and pasture increased significantly in this period. In terms of the percentage of meadow and pasture to arable, the Vale of Gloucester stands out as the most prominent region with just over 3%, followed by the Cotswolds at just under 2% and the Forest of Dean at almost 1%. The main reason for the dominance of the Vale is due to continued activity to the northeast of Gloucester along with the emergence of a group of parishes with evidence of transfers in the extreme southwest of the region. This pattern and the limited data for the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean will be discussed in relation to map G28 below.

[148] PRO: CP25/1/73/7/78.

[149] PRO: CP25/1/73/7/88.

[150] Hilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-84; Dyer, 'Sheepcotes', *op. cit.*, p. 148.

G27: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



Map G28: Distribution, 1251-1302.

This map reveals the development of a pattern, the origins of which were apparent in map G26. In the previous period there was an important sub-district noted to the northeast of Gloucester with significant records of the transfer of wetland pastures. This pattern appears to have spread southwards along the banks of the river Severn. For example at Haresfield, just south of Gloucester, in 1260, Alan Martel, through his attorney, Ralph le Sumeter obtained 21 acres of meadow, along with a carucate of arable, three acres of wood and a messuage, from Robert de Hanford.[151] Further south, there is evidence of transfers on opposing sides of the river Severn; at Lydney (on the western banks of the river in the Forest of Dean region) in 1261, William Wycher obtained ten acres of meadow, a carucate of arable and a messuage, from John de Lydney.[152] At Berkeley, on the eastern side of the Severn, in 1285, William Theyn and his wife Edith obtained eight acres of meadow, 20 acres of arable and a messuage, from Willeburn Golde.[153] There are also records of transfers in a group of parishes adjacent to Berkeley: North Nibley, Stinchcombe and Dursley. In the extreme south of the region there is a cluster of parishes, near the Severn estuary, with notable records of meadow. For example, in Aust in 1292, Roger Corbet obtained eight acres from Nicholas le Scot de Hill.[154]

Most of the data for the Cotswolds is confined to the Cirencester district, most notably the 32 acres transferred in 1278, along with a carucate of arable, from Roger de Ravingham to Walter de Helyun.[155] There is also a significant individual transfer,

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[151] PRO: CP25/1/74/26/580.

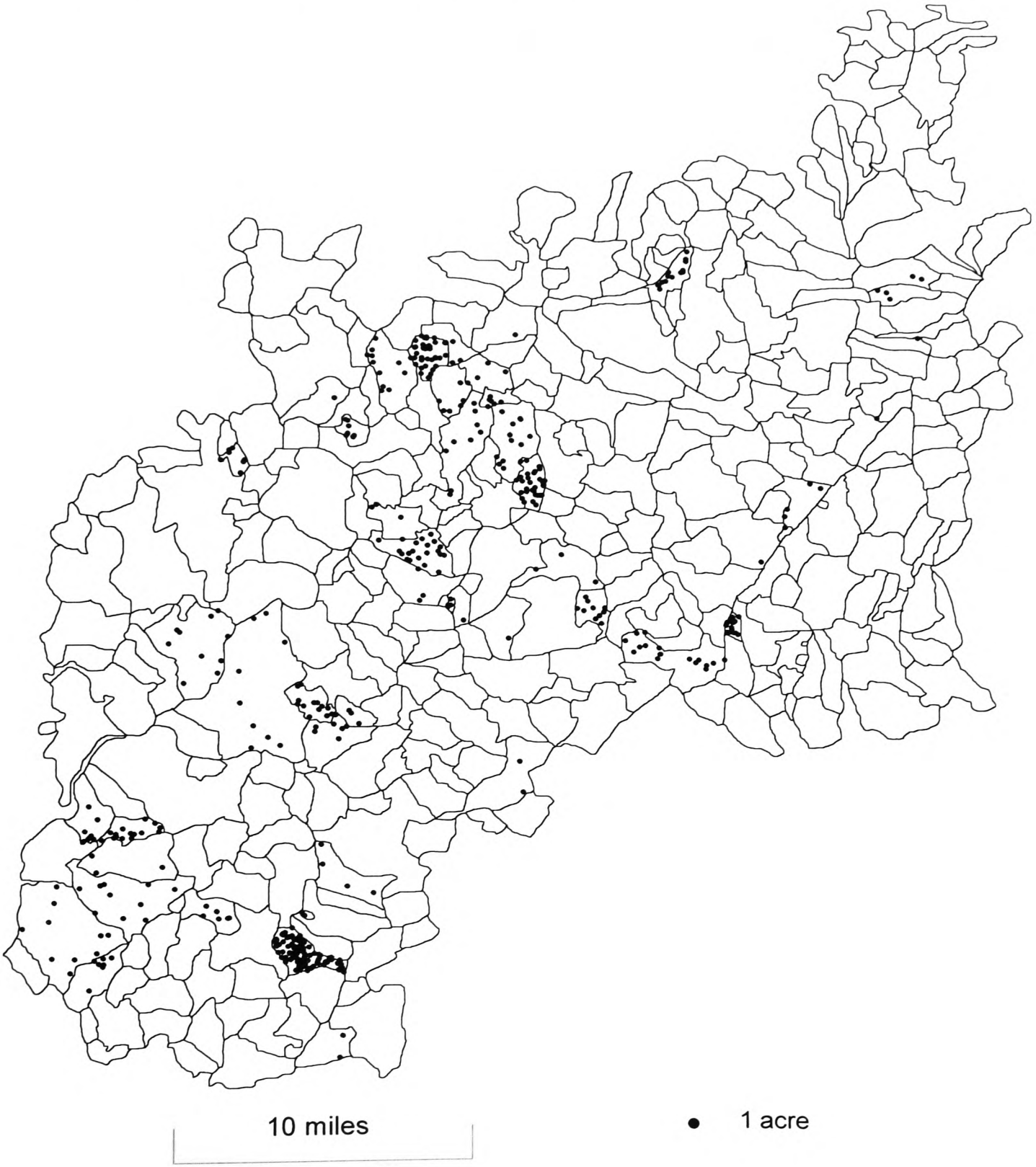
[152] PRO: CP25/1/74/27/602.

[153] PRO: CP25/1/75/33/76.

[154] PRO: CP25/1/75/36/167.

[155] PRO: CP25/1/75/31/39.

G28: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



at the end of this period, associated with a the parish of Codrington in the south of the Cotswold region; in 1302 Gilbert, son of Estene obtained, through his attorney, Henry de Braundeston, 60 acres of meadow, 50 acres of pasture, 20 acres of wood, six carucates of arable, a messuage and a mill, from Nicholas, abbot of Stanley.[156] This document shows that there were important pasturelands being transferred in the Cotswolds at this time but on a regional level the Vale is much more significant in terms of the distribution of records of pasture, most of which are in the form of meadow and closely associated with the banks of river Severn. Indeed, Dyer has pointed out that hay was difficult to obtain in the Cotswolds because the "river valleys were too narrow to contain much meadow" and it was often obtained from the wetland pastures of the Thames Valley.[157] He claims that meadow was "highly valued" and in Gloucestershire in the late thirteenth century "it rarely fell below 8d. per acre, and was commonly said to be worth 1/- 6d. or 2/- 0d. per acre, while most arable was valued at between 3d. and 6d. per acre."[158]

Map G29: Regional percentages, 1303-1352.

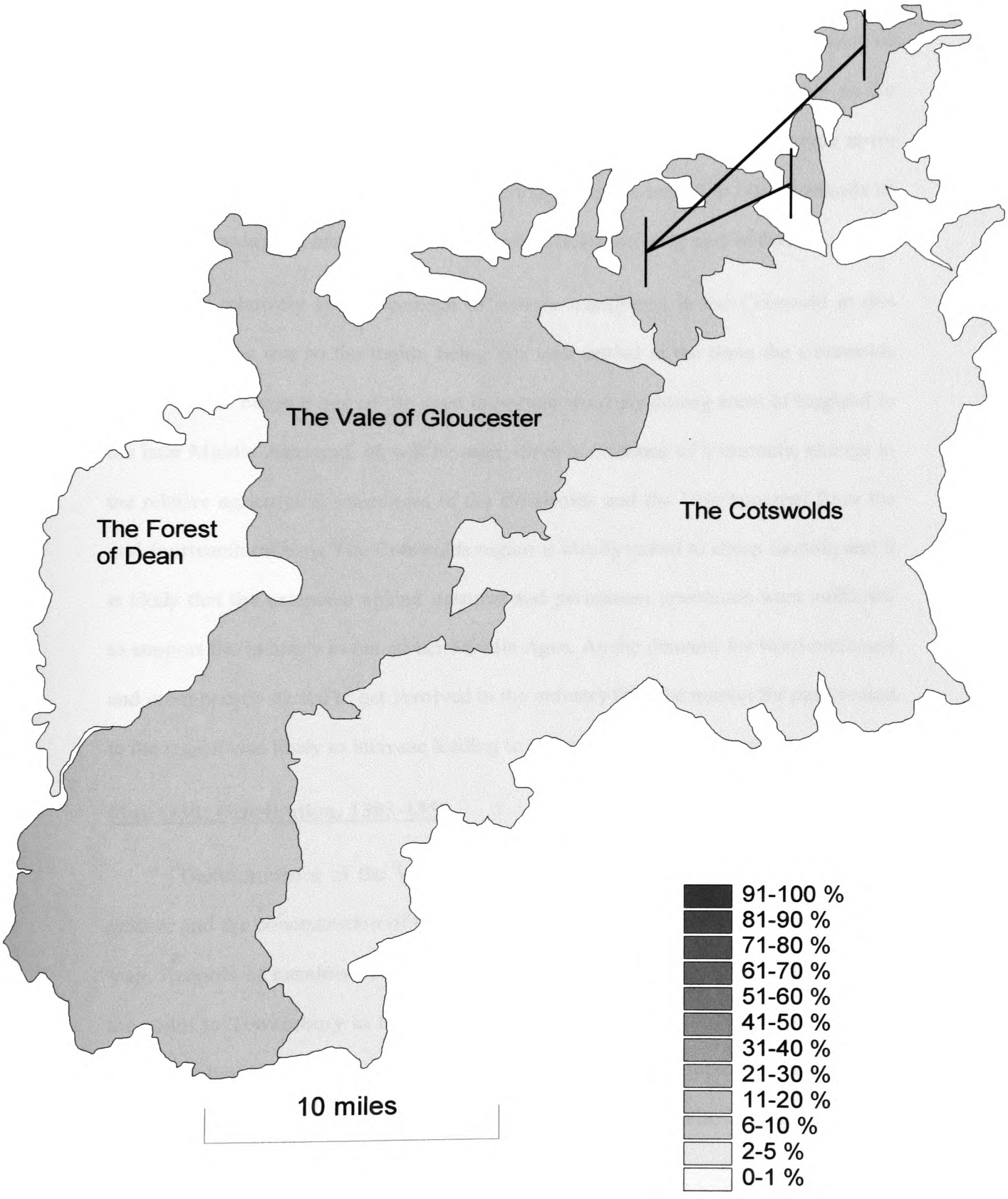
There has been a dramatic rise in the amount of meadow and pasture recorded in fines and in the percentage of it to arable. However, in regional terms most of the increase has been associated with the Vale of Gloucester, which has risen to 10%. There has been a much less significant rise to just under 4% in the Cotswolds and there has been a slight fall in the Forest of Dean. The rise in the number of transfers recording meadow is very significant; in the previous period meadow was mentioned in 16% of the fines issued. By this period that figure had risen to 55%. The number of

[156] PRO: CP25/1/75/39/232.

[157] Dyer, 'Sheepcotes', *op. cit.*, p. 158.

[158] Dyer, 'Farming Techniques', *op. cit.*, p. 376.

G29: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



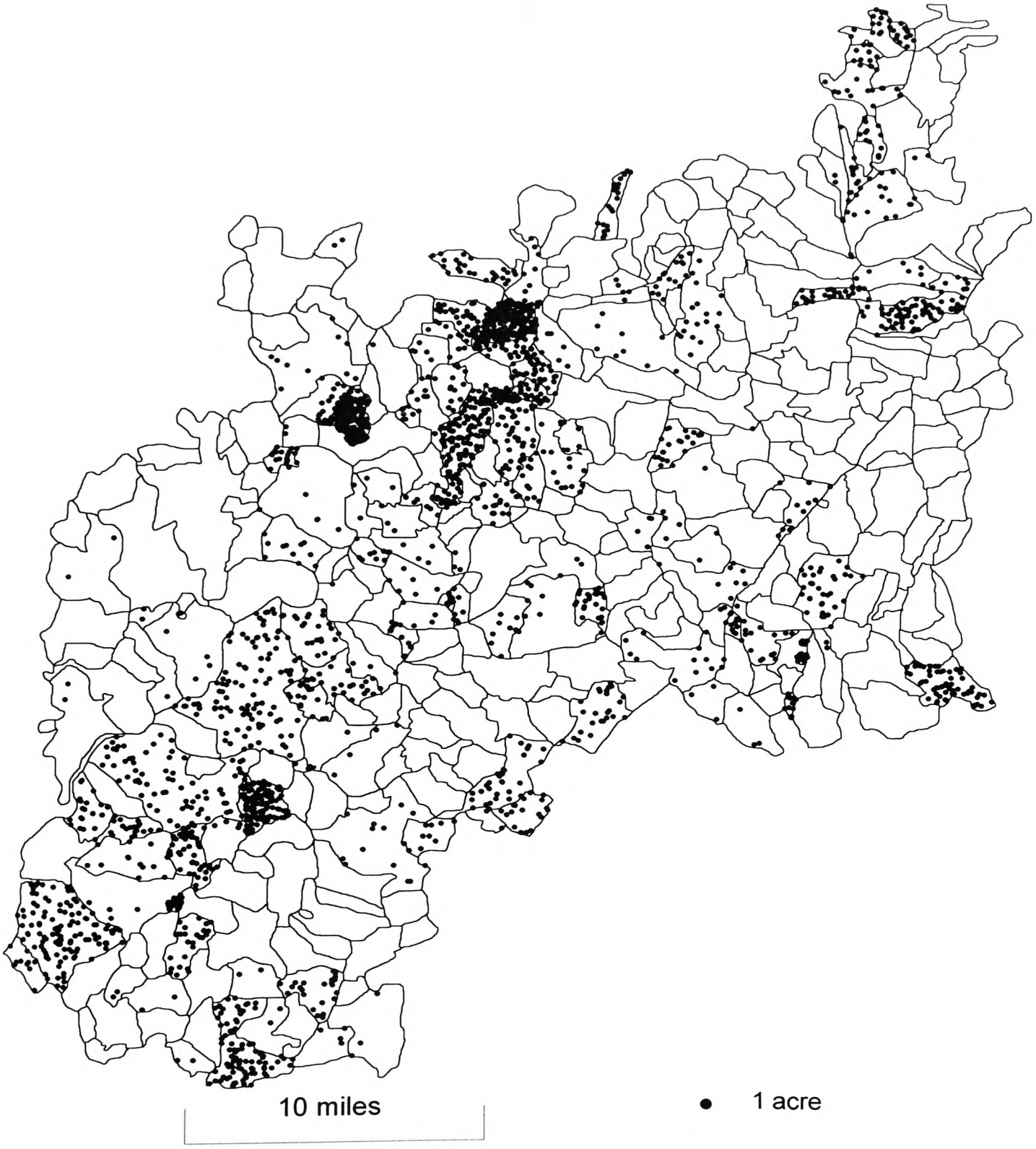
fines mentioning pasture, as distinct from meadow, has also risen but much less dramatically (see table G3). The implication seems to be that the Vale of Gloucester was a very well settled district by the early fourteenth century and that the valley of the River Severn attracted the greatest activity. The wetland pastures available on the banks of the river would have encouraged dairying which may have become more important during the middle part of this period as people turned to other methods of farming following the harvest failures characteristic of the early part of this era.

The relatively low percentage of pasture transferred in the Cotswold in this period could be due to the region being less well settled at the time; the Cotswolds region was to become one of the most important wool producing areas of England in the later Middle Ages and, as will be seen, there is evidence of a dramatic change in the relative agricultural economies of the Cotswolds and the Vale apparent from the mid-fourteenth century. The Cotswolds region is ideally suited to sheep farming and it is likely that the extensive upland pastures and permanent grasslands were sufficient to support the industry in the earlier Middle Ages. As the demand for wool increased and more people started to get involved in the industry then the market for pastureland in the region was likely to increase leading to more records of conveyances.

Map G30: Distribution, 1303-1352.

The dominance of the Vale of Gloucester in terms of recorded meadow and pasture and the concentration of transfers along the Severn Valley are revealed by this map. Records of meadow extend all along the line of the River Severn from Aust in the south to Tewkesbury in the north. The most important grouping is in the upper Severn Valley between Gloucester and Tewkesbury. The groupings near the River Severn extend into the Dean region near Lydney. There is also a small district of

G30: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



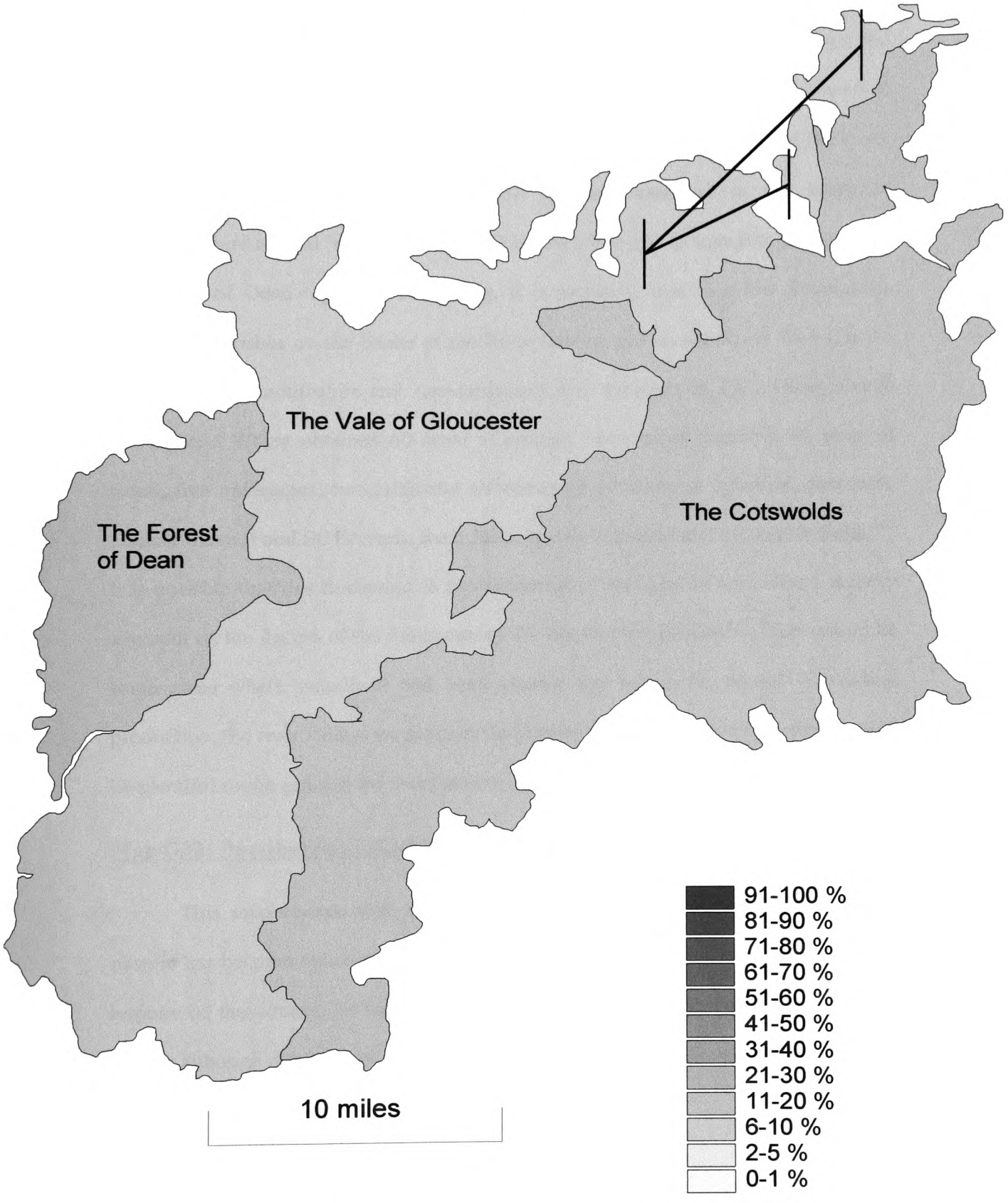
transfers apparent in the far north of the county, on the Warwickshire border around Welford. Records of meadow and pasture are more widespread in the Cotswolds during this period with significant clusters around Longborough in the north, Lechlade in the extreme east, near Cirencester in the east and near Tetbury and Cold Ashton in the south. Overall, most of the transfers of meadow and pasture relating to the Cotswolds are in the extreme east of the region, on the borders of Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.

Map G31: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

Despite the massive fall in the number of fines issued during this period there is a continued increase in the percentage of meadow and pasture in relation to arable recorded; there has been a slight rise in the Vale to 11% but there has been a very dramatic rise in both the Cotswolds (16.5%) and the Forest of Dean (17%). It seems likely that the rise in evidence of pastoral farming in this period is associated with the decline in arable farming that was taking place in many parts of England throughout the fourteenth century. It is probable that the highly populated Vale of Gloucester suffered high mortality rates during the famines of the early fourteenth century and the visitations of the Black Death a generation later. The continued rise in transfers of meadow and pasture in this region suggests that people were experimenting with a variety of farming methods although it is clear that the Vale was still an important arable region.

The changes apparent in the agriculture of the Vale and the Cotswolds have been discussed in relation to map G19 above. It seems that the Vale began to support a greater number of farmers cultivating smaller acreages whereas the Cotswolds was developing into an important wool-producing region; there are examples of fines

G31: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



being used to transfer some very high percentages of pasture in this region. For example, a fine, issued in York in 1392, records the transfer of 200 acres of pasture along with 40 acres of arable and eight messuages in Wiggold (Ampney Crucis) and the neighbouring parish of Cirencester.[159] It seems that Cirencester was at the heart of an important pastoral district situated between the valleys of the Churn and the Coln. Another important pastoral district seems to have emerged in the south of Gloucestershire around Yate (see map G32 below). The rise in transfers of pasture in the Forest of Dean region is interesting. It is primarily due to a few documents, relating to parishes on the banks of the River Severn and on the River Wye (on the borders of Monmouthshire and Herefordshire). For example, in 1377 Henry Dorch and Edward Whyte obtained 60 acres of pasture, 36 acres of meadow, 46 acres of wood, five messuages, two mills and six carucates of arable in Newland, Staunton, English Bicknor and St. Briavels, from John Joce de Newland and his wife Isabella.[160] It is possible that this document is representative of the type of agricultural activity apparent on the fringes of the forest during the late fourteenth century; there would be some areas where woodland had been cleared and would be suitable for arable production, the river valleys would provide meadow suitable for dairying, there would be plentiful rough grazing for sheep and woodland pasture for pigs.

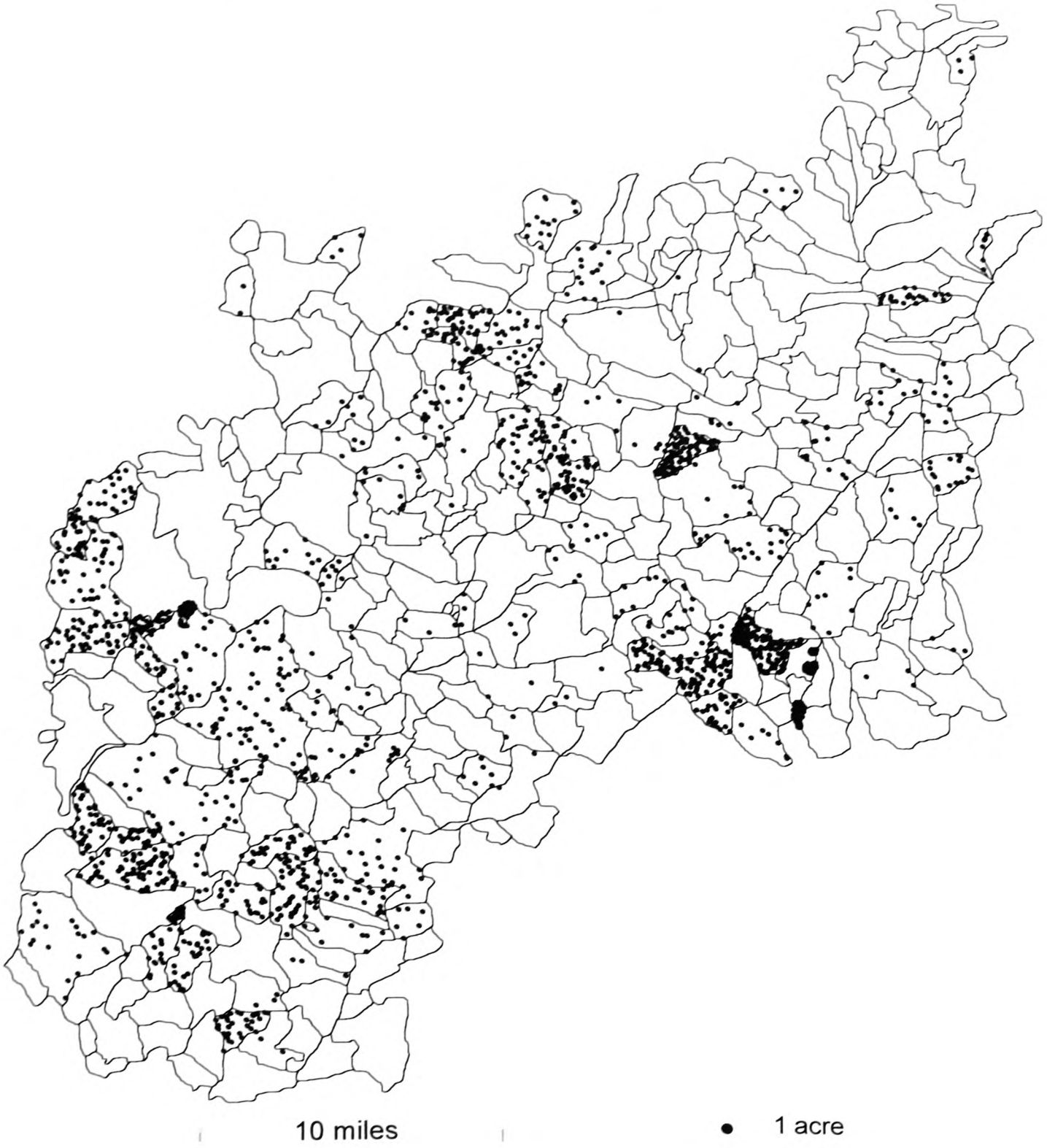
Map G32: Distribution, 1353-1404.

This map reveals that the overall distribution of transfers of meadow and pasture has become much more widespread; there are significant records for the three regions of the county. In the Vale the Severn Valley continues to be a significant district although distribution is much less dense than in the previous period; two more

[159] PRO: CP25/1/78/82/106.

[160] PRO: CP25/1/78/78/4.

G32: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.

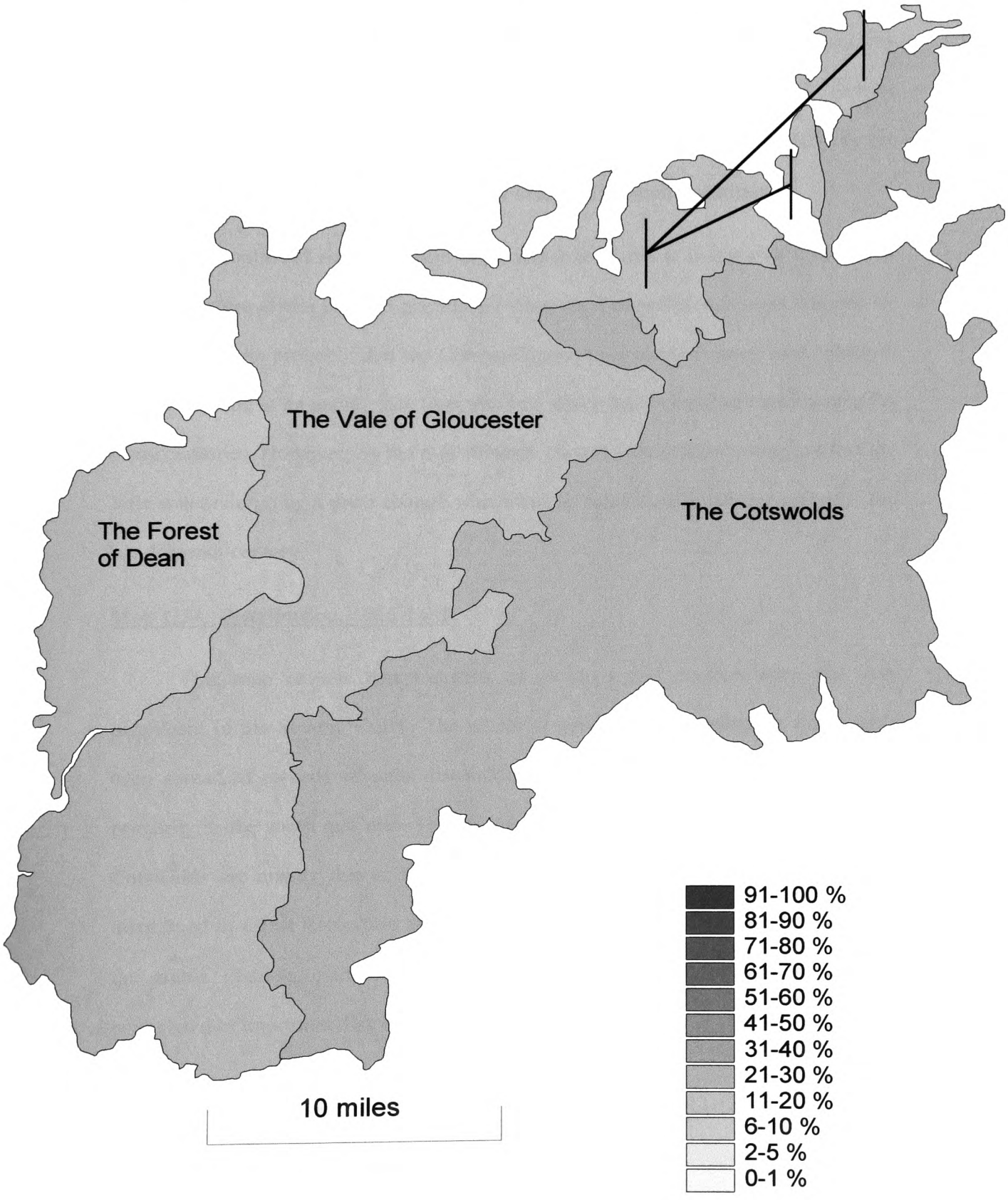


distinct districts have emerged in the Vale, one in the upper Severn Valley between Hasfield and Churchdown (a district that has had continually high percentages of meadow and pasture recorded), the other in the south of the region around Elberton. There are two distinct districts apparent in the Cotswolds also; the first is a group of parishes around Cirencester, mentioned in relation to map G31 above, the second is in the southern part of the region and appears to be linked with the growth in the southern Vale. In the Forest of Dean region, the evidence is primarily from the parishes running alongside the rivers Wye and Severn (see above).

Map G33: Regional percentages, 1405-1455.

There is another big rise in the overall percentage of meadow and pasture transferred in this period; in the Cotswolds meadow and pasture now account for a quarter of the total land transferred in fines. The other interesting statistic is the increase in the percentage of pasture, as distinct from meadow, recorded (see table G3). It is possible that this is related to the importance of Gloucestershire as a wool-producing region; the records of pasture may, primarily, relate to land for sheep farming whereas meadow would be associated with dairying. When the records were analysed as separate land types it became clear that the highest percentages of pasture, as distinct from meadow, were in the Cotswolds, particularly around Lemington in the north, at Great Rissington and Eastleach Turvill in the east, around Withington in the centre and near Acton Turville in the south. An example of the importance of pasture, as distinct from meadow, in the Cotswolds at this time is provided by a fine, issued in 1443 and concerning the transfer of the manor of Great Rissington (on the Oxfordshire border), along with 200 acres of pasture, 30 acres of meadow, ten virgates of arable and ten messuages from Henry Husey de Hertyng to John Grenvill

G33: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



and John Shyngey.[161] Meadow appears to have been transferred in much smaller amounts generally and this process can be seen in table G3; the average area of meadow transferred remains relatively similar until the late fifteenth century, whereas the average area of pasture recorded rises dramatically in each period. This is probably due to the fact that meadow was a scarce commodity, particularly in the Cotswolds, and was, therefore, usually only available in small quantities.[162]

The continued rise in pasture at the expense of arable is apparent throughout Gloucestershire at this time. In percentage terms the Cotswolds was most affected by this change; it is probable that the Cotswolds moved towards a much more pastoral type of farming at an earlier date than the Vale which had been a well settled area for many centuries. However, by the mid-fifteenth century, the evidence suggests that the Vale was undergoing a great change which was to become even more apparent in the late fifteenth century.

Map G34: Distribution, 1405-1455.

This map reveals that transfers of meadow and pasture were still very prominent in the Severn Valley. The whole of southern Gloucestershire has a fairly even spread of records whereas distribution in the Cotswolds region as a whole is primarily in the south and east. The very dense clusters in individual parishes in the Cotswolds are mainly due to the transfer of large amounts of pasture of the type mentioned in Great Rissington above. This map indicates the continued break up of the arable districts, particularly in the low-lying areas of the county, and the emergence of important districts supporting pastoral farming.

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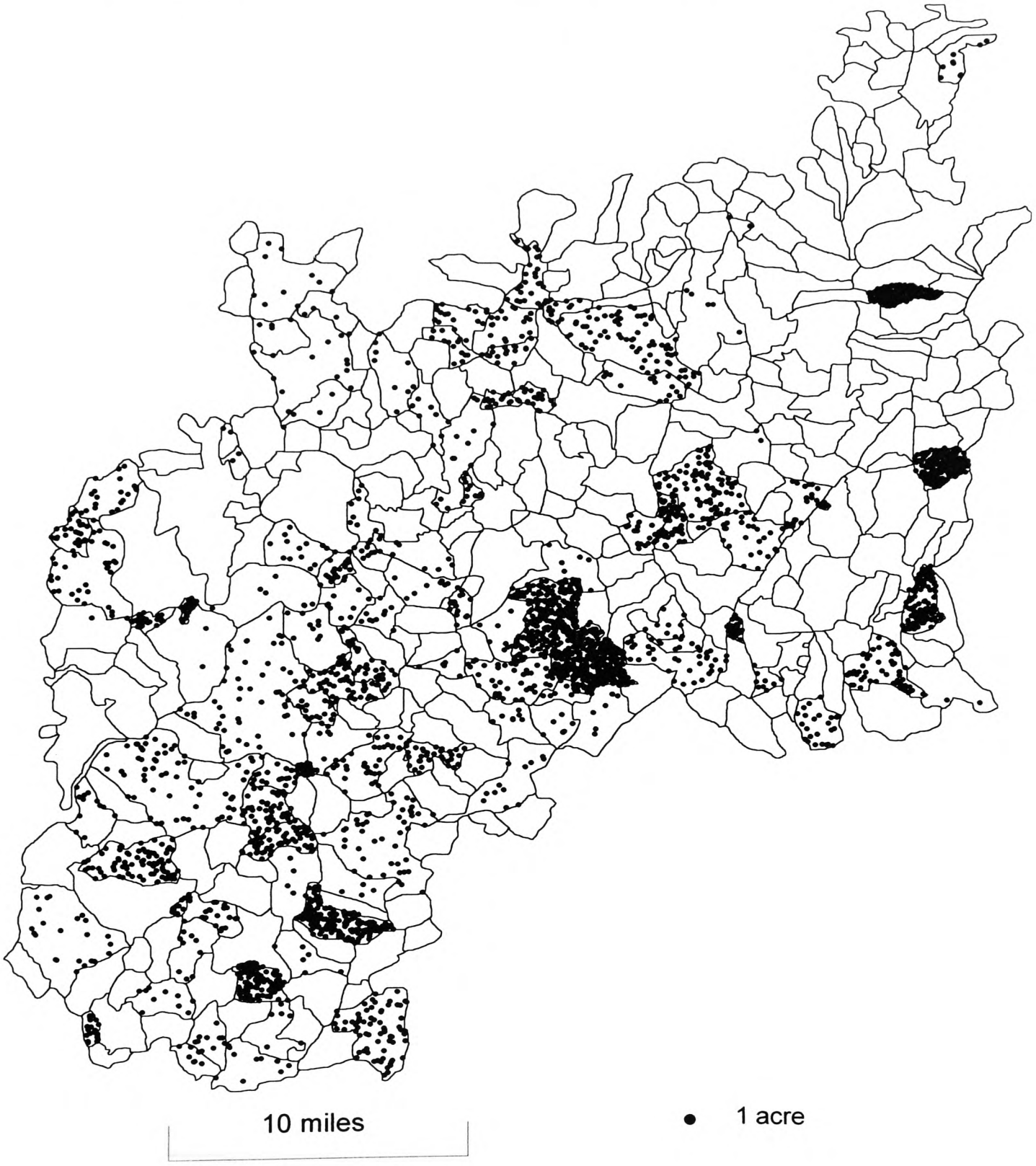
[161] PRO: CP25/1/79/90/95.

[162] Hilton, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

G34: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



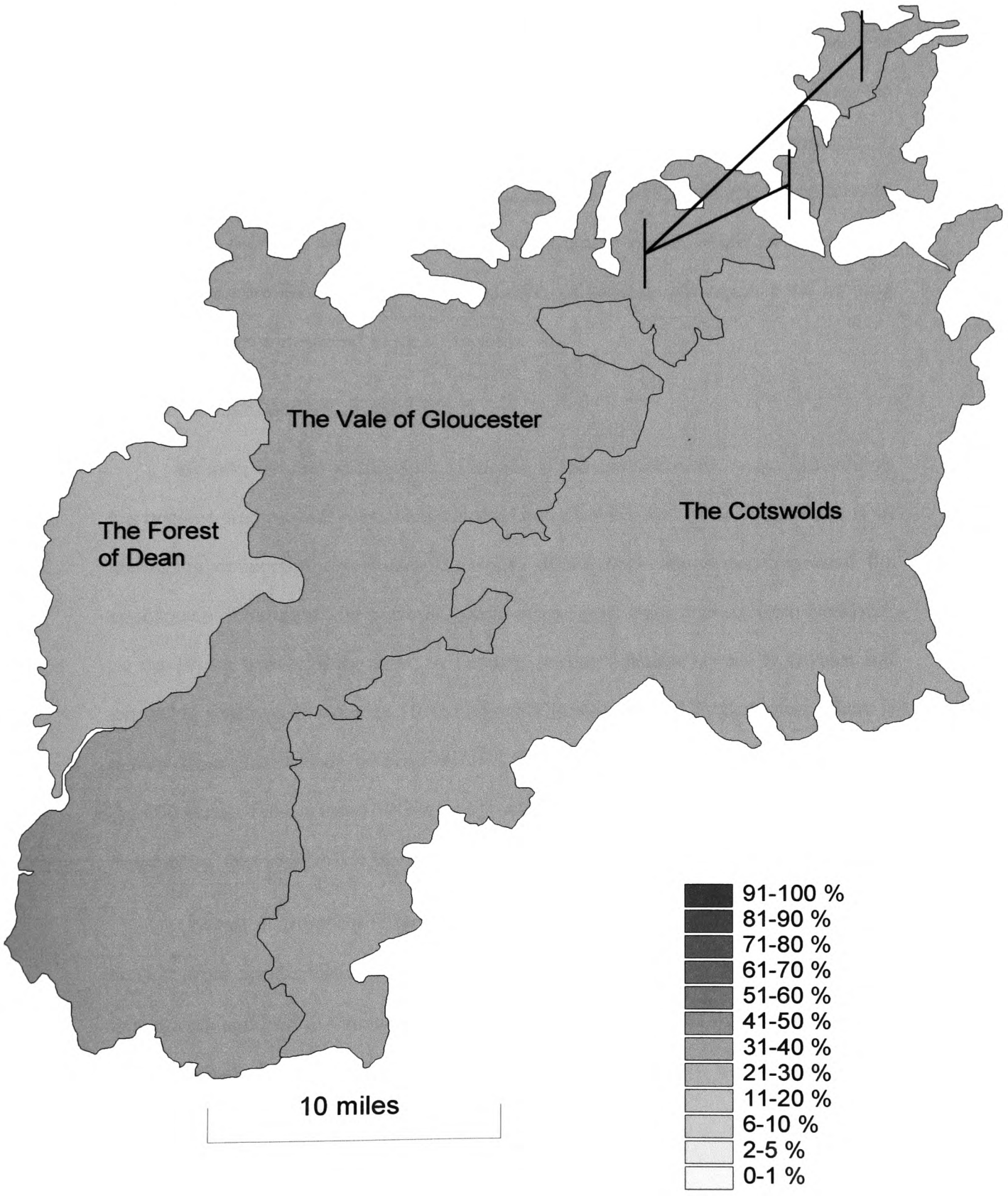
Map G35: Regional percentages, 1456-1508.

There were fewer Gloucestershire fines issued during this period than in any other but the average acreage recorded in each document was much higher than at any other time; over three times the amount than in the early fourteenth century (see table G3). Dyer has encountered this situation in his analysis of the fines for Staffordshire and Warwickshire. He claims that the massive increase in pasture was "caused partly by the conversion of arable land to pasture, and partly by the enclosure of common pastures and wastes, so that these lands were included in the properties conveyed by fines."[163]

There has been a continued increase in the amount of meadow and pasture transferred but this increase has been concentrated in a fewer number of parishes. In the Cotswolds and the Vale of Gloucester records of meadow and pasture account for well over a third of the total land transferred in fines in the period. In the Forest of Dean region the figure is a quarter. A sustained rise in the amount of meadow and pasture in the Vale in the fifteenth century has led to this region having a slightly higher percentage of meadow and pasture than the Cotswolds. However, activity is more widespread in the Cotswolds with almost 40% of the parishes there having records of transfers of meadow and pasture, compared to 30% in the Vale; indeed, overall activity was over double that of the Vale (see map G12). In the Forest of Dean region almost half of the parishes there have such records which suggests that meadow and pasture were continuing to make inroads, perhaps at a slower pace, but on a quite widespread level in certain the less heavily wooded parts of this region.

[163] Dyer, 'Occupation of the Land', *The Agrarian History*, Vol. III, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

G35: Regional percentages of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.



The evidence indicates the continued increase in pasture at the expense of arable. The dramatic rise in the Vale was concentrated in certain districts whereas activity was noticeably more widespread in the Cotswolds. This is interesting because the Vale, despite having a higher percentage of meadow and pasture than the Cotswolds also has a slightly higher percentage of arable recorded (see map G23). Since overall activity in this period was concentrated in the Cotswolds this appears to indicate that the Vale was still a very important arable region which now contained districts that were involved in more mixed types of farming whereas pastoral farming was much more widespread in the Cotswolds.

Map G36: Distribution: 1456-1508.

Despite the rise in transfers of meadow and pasture in the Vale, distribution has become fragmented, particularly in the Upper Severn Valley, although there is an interesting concentration towards the south of the Vale which may represent the appearance of an important pastoral district covering all three regions, from Newland, on the Welsh border in the west, to Tetbury, on the Wiltshire border in the east and extending northwards towards Stroud and southwards beyond Tytherington. There is a very dense cluster near the centre of this district around Nympsfield, mainly due to the 400 acres of pasture and 100 acres of meadow obtained there, in 1507, by Thomas Poyntz and Thomas Trolley from John Walsh.[164]

Overall distribution is quite patchy although it can be seen that some of the densest areas appear throughout the Cotswolds, with particularly high concentrations to the north and east of Cirencester, such as in the district around Rendcomb where, in 1503, William Gray, William Rudhall, William Denys, Edward Crowley and Roger

[164] PRO:CP25/1/79/97/73.

G36: Distribution of meadow and pasture recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.

Porter obtained 800 acres of pasture and 120 acres of meadow.[165] There are similar, large concentrations of meadow and pasture in parishes in the eastern Cotswolds from Tormarton, on the Wiltshire border in the south, through Eastleach Turville, on the Oxfordshire border, to Chipping Camden, on the Worcestershire border in the north.

In the Vale, the main areas of activity are the group of parishes around Berkeley, on the banks of the River Severn, including Slimbridge, Arlingham and Frampton-on-Severn and near the mouth of the Severn around Aust. The rise in the percentage of meadow and pasture in the Vale during this period and the concentration of parishes, with such records, along the banks of the River Severn suggests that the Vale had become an important dairying region; indeed, in contrast to those mentioned in relation to the Cotswolds in this period, there are individual fines, relating to the Vale, in which meadow is transferred in higher percentages than pasture. In 1497, John Walshe, Arthur Kemys, William Frome and William Smith, obtained 272 acres of meadow and 208 acres of pasture from Elizabeth Haryson, the widow of Thomas Stanshawe, in Aylburton, Aust, Cotes (in Aust) and Woolaston.[166] Aust and Cotes are on the eastern banks of the River Severn whereas Aylburton and Woolaston are on the western bank in the Forest of Dean region. This suggests that a similar process was occurring in parishes along the river in that region. Other fines relating to the Dean region reveal the importance of pasture and pastoralism in this distinctive area; in 1480, the chaplain William Naylor, in conjunction with Richard Hamond and William Domyng, obtained a messuage, a garden, a water-mill and 43

[165] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/58.

[166] PRO: CP25/1/79/96/33.

acres of pasture in Lydney, Newarne (in the parish of West Dean) and Whitecroft (in the parish of Newland).[167]

6.6(v) Changes in wood over time.

1199-1250

There is insufficient data of woodland acreages to produce maps for this period. However, the transfer of wood was recorded in a few Gloucestershire fines; two of these transfers were mentioned in relation to graph G4 above. Another transfer occurred in 1240, when John de Berkeley obtained three acres of wood in Ozleworth, along with two virgates of arable, from the monk, Odo de Cruks, who was acting as attorney for John, the abbot of Kingswood.[168] There are also a few records which record wood in this period but the location has not been accurately identified. In 1235 a fine was issued containing information about woodland and pigs, possibly in a place known as Bishop's Wood.[169] However, the document is so badly faded and damaged that it has not been possible to gather any data about the people involved or the amount of woodland recorded. Also, in 1240, Ascelina de Shipston obtained ten acres of wood and a carucate of arable from Thomas de Littleton.[170] Although it has not proved possible to identify the place name in the document, the personal names Littleton and Shipton could indicate that the transfer took place somewhere in northeastern Gloucestershire, possibly in the vicinity of Wichcombe.

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[167] PRO: CP25/1/79/94/51.

[168] PRO: CP25/1/73/13/240.

[169] PRO: CP25/1/73/11/189.

[170] PRO: CP25/1/73/13/247.

Two of the fines which recorded transfers of wood in Gloucestershire during this period involved abbots; the Abbot Osbern who obtained an unspecified amount of wood in Slimbrige,[171] and John, the abbot of Kingswood, who disposed of three acres in Ozleworth.[172] Dyer has shown the important role played by monks in the clearance of woodland in Gloucestershire, notably the 200 acres cleared by the monks of Tintern Abbey in 1282.[173] Overall, there is, perhaps, less evidence of assarting in Gloucestershire in the thirteenth century than in Shropshire, for example, although the increase in woodland transfers apparent in fines in the later thirteenth century and early fourteenth centuries seems indicative of a need to turn more woodland over to arable in the face of a growing population.

Map G37: Regional percentages, 1251-1302.

Overall percentages of wood are still quite low but they are notably higher than the percentage of meadow and pasture recorded for this period. This may be indicative of new settlement as woodland could be cleared to make way for greater arable production. The most significant area is the Vale with wood accounting for over 3% of the total land transferred in fines. It is likely that the Vale was the most well populated region in the thirteenth century and an increase in population there would have encouraged further woodland clearances. There is some evidence to suggest that this was occurring in areas of the Cotswolds and the Forest of Dean but the bulk of the conveyances were associated with parishes in the Vale.

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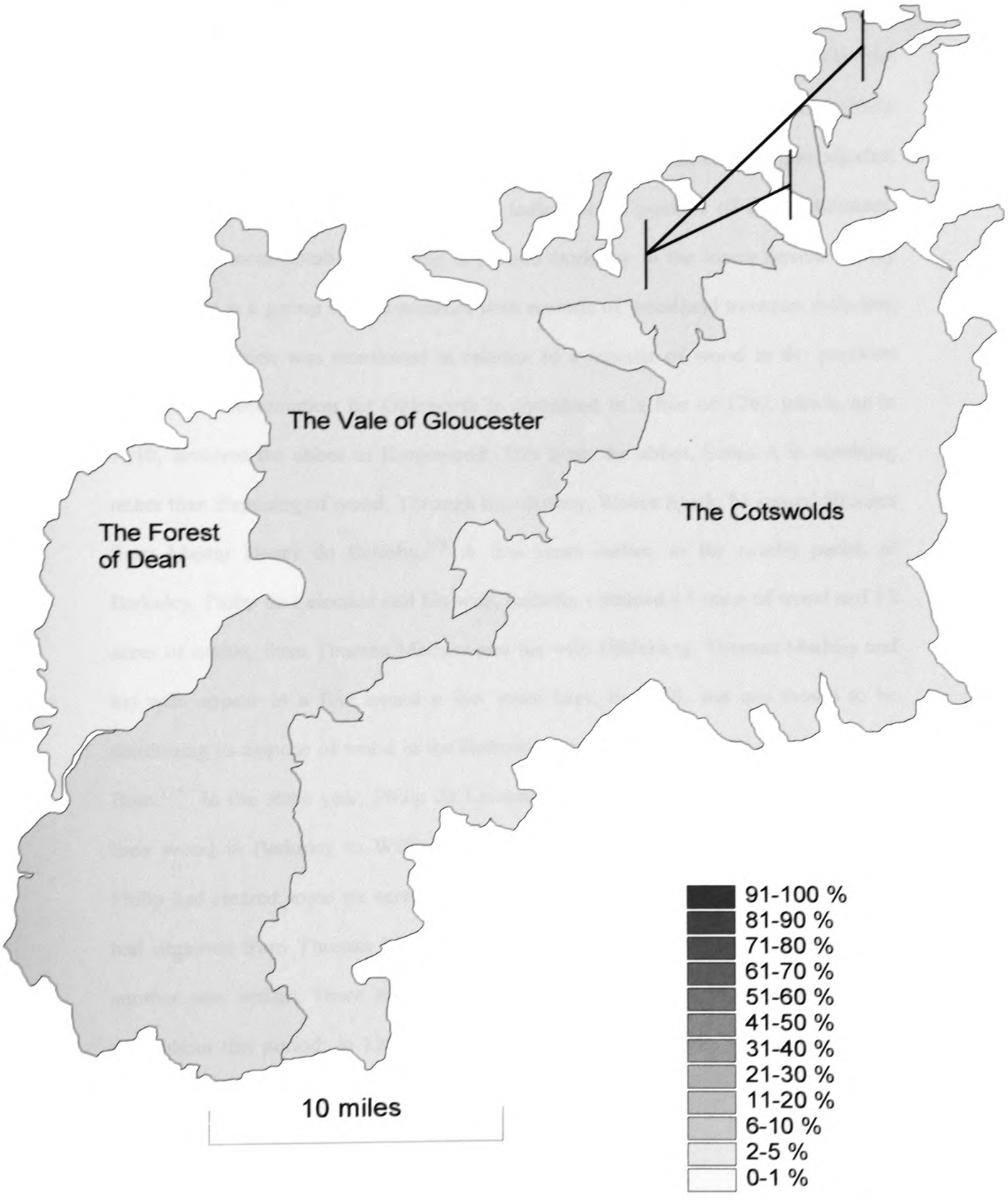
[171] PRO: CP25/1/73/9/135.

[172] PRO: CP25/1/73/13/240.

[173] Dyer, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, p. 228-29.

G37: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



Map G38: Distribution, 1251-1302.

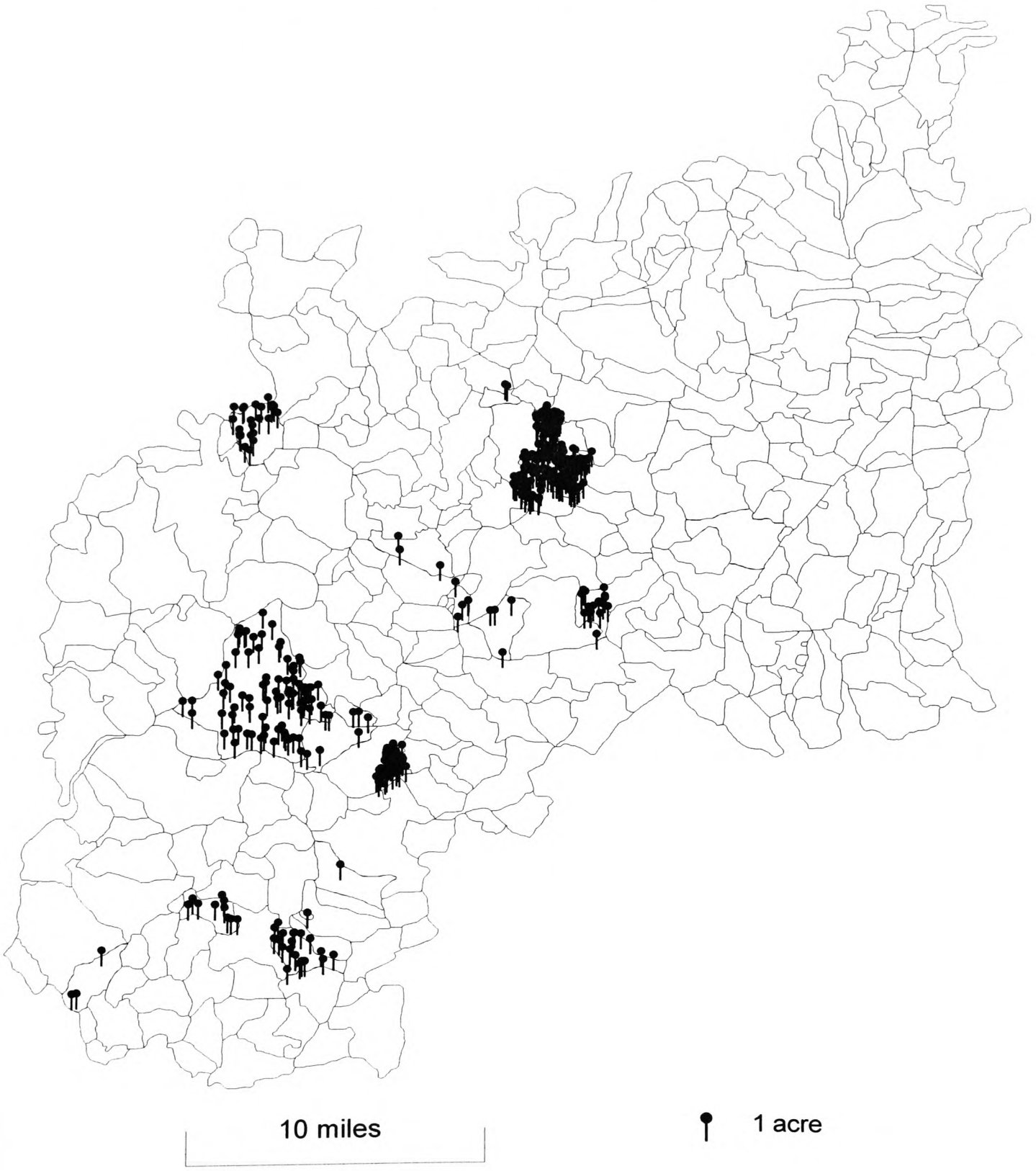
This map reveals that the woodland transfers in this period were associated with parishes towards the south and west of the county; there is no evidence for the northern part of the Cotswolds or the northern Vale. Although distribution is quite sparse there are some interesting clusters that reveal transfers as occurring in adjacent parishes at similar times. This could be indicative of pockets of new settlement. Perhaps the most notable grouping is around Berkeley in the lower Severn Valley where there is a group of five parishes with records of woodland transfers including Ozleworth, which was mentioned in relation to a transfer of wood in the previous period. The information for Ozleworth is contained in a fine of 1262 which, as in 1240, involves the abbot of Kingswood. This time, the abbot, Samson, is obtaining rather than disposing of wood. Through his attorney, Walter Spark, he gained 50 acres from Master Henry de Belesby.[174] A few years earlier, in the nearby parish of Berkeley, Philip de Leicester and his wife, Isabella, obtained 44 acres of wood and 12 acres of arable, from Thomas Mathias and his wife Hildeburg. Thomas Mathias and his wife appear in a fine issued a few years later, in 1258, and are shown to be continuing to dispose of wood in the Berkeley area when they sell six acres to Robert Buin.[175] In the same year, Philip de Leicester and his wife disposed of 38 acres of their wood in Berkeley to William Manduit de Hamslap.[176] It seems possible that Philip had cleared some six acres of the woodland to add to the 12 acres of arable he had obtained from Thomas Mathias and then moved on the remaining 38 acres to another new settler. There is evidence of woodland transfers in the Berkeley area throughout this period; in 1286 William de Edgton and his wife, Juliana, obtained a

[174] CP25/1/74/27/607.

[175] PRO: CP25/1/74/24/531.

[176] PRO: CP25/1/74/24/532.

G38: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1251-1302.



third part of 100 acres of arable and 20 acres of wood in Ham from Thomas de Berkeley.[177] The important role played by the Berkeley family in the assarting movement has been attested by Finberg and Dyer and has been discussed in relation to section 6.2 above.[178]

There is another group of transfers in the middle of Gloucestershire, to the east and west of Stroud. Most of these occurred towards the end of this period, such as the four acres of wood obtained in Paganhill, near Stroud, in 1300, by William, son of Henry Sthenard, from his father. There is an interesting cluster of parishes with evidence of woodland conveyances to the north of this district, near Badgeworth to the east of Gloucester; in 1286, Walter le Verur obtained 60 acres of wood along with a messuage, a mill and a carucate of arable in Bentham (Badgeworth) from Richard le Verur.[179] Twenty years earlier, there was monastic involvement in the area when William, the prior of Lanthony by Gloucester (Llanthony Secunda), through his attorney, William le Waleys, obtained 45 acres of wood, along with a messuage, 25 acres of pasture, five acres of meadow and 120 acres of arable in Brockworth, from Laurence de Chaundos.[180]

The other notable grouping of woodland records is in the far south of the county, in an arc from Westbury-on-Trym near Bristol, through Frampton Cotterell, in the lower Vale, to Old Sodbury in the south of the Cotswolds region. There is also evidence of woodland being transferred on the northern edge of the Forest of Dean near the Herefordshire border. A fine, issued in York in 1300, records the transfer of 24 acres of wood and 28 acres of arable in Longhope, near Mitcheldean, from Henry

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[177] PRO: CP25/1/75/34/115.

[178] Finberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80; Dyer, 'New Settlement', *op. cit.*, p. 232.

[179] PRO: CP25/1/75/33/81.

[180] PRO: CP25/1/74/27/610.

de Ludlow to Adam de Gamages.[181] Their regional names suggest that these men were from Ludlow in Shropshire and Mansell Gamage in Herefordshire. This could be indicative of new settlement in the area from neighbouring counties.

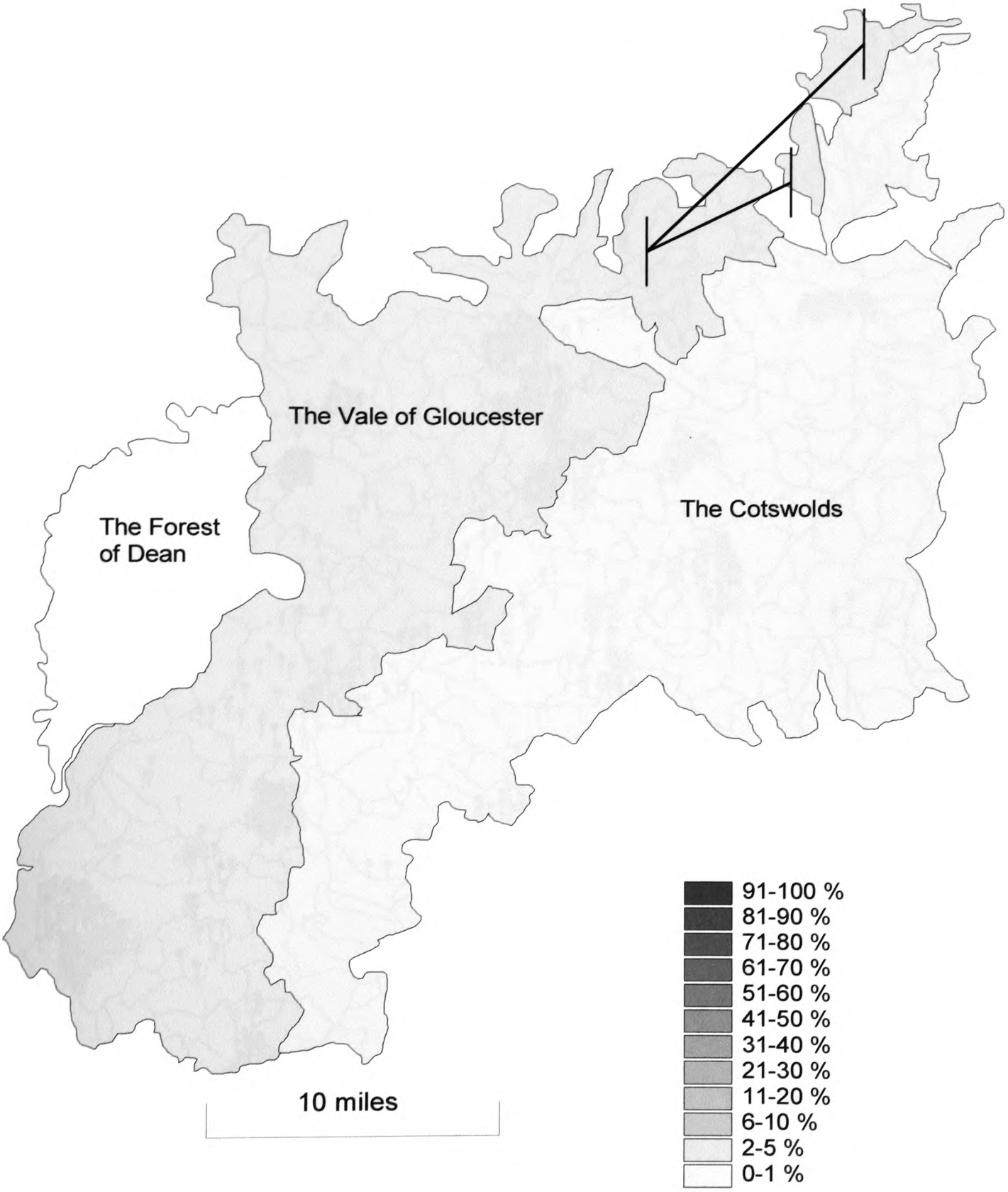
Map G39: Regional percentages, 1303-1352.

Despite the rise in the number of fines mentioning woodland in this period, there is a slight fall in the overall percentage of woodland recorded. This is interesting because it may indicate that woodland clearances were quite intensive in the later thirteenth century and had led to an increase in the amount of land under the plough. If, as it seems, woodland clearances had been mainly concentrated in the Vale during the thirteenth century, then the rise in transfers in the Cotswolds during the fourteenth century could be due to a fall in the amount of woodland available for clearance in the Vale. The overall fall in the percentage of woodland combined with the increase in the distribution of woodland recorded could be due to a rise in population leading to a need to clear woodland to create more cultivatable land. The series of bad harvests in the first decades of the fourteenth century would have led to further pressure as people tried to escape the crisis by putting more land under the plough. The fall in the percentage of woodland transferred may suggest that it was becoming a scarce commodity in some districts, although the lack of data for the Forest of Dean region could indicate that people were not so desperate as to have to try to farm this heavily wooded district in great numbers. It should also be remembered that despite the decrease in the extent of royal forest from the 1250s, a considerable area of the country was subject to Forest Law in the early fourteenth century.[182] The Forest of

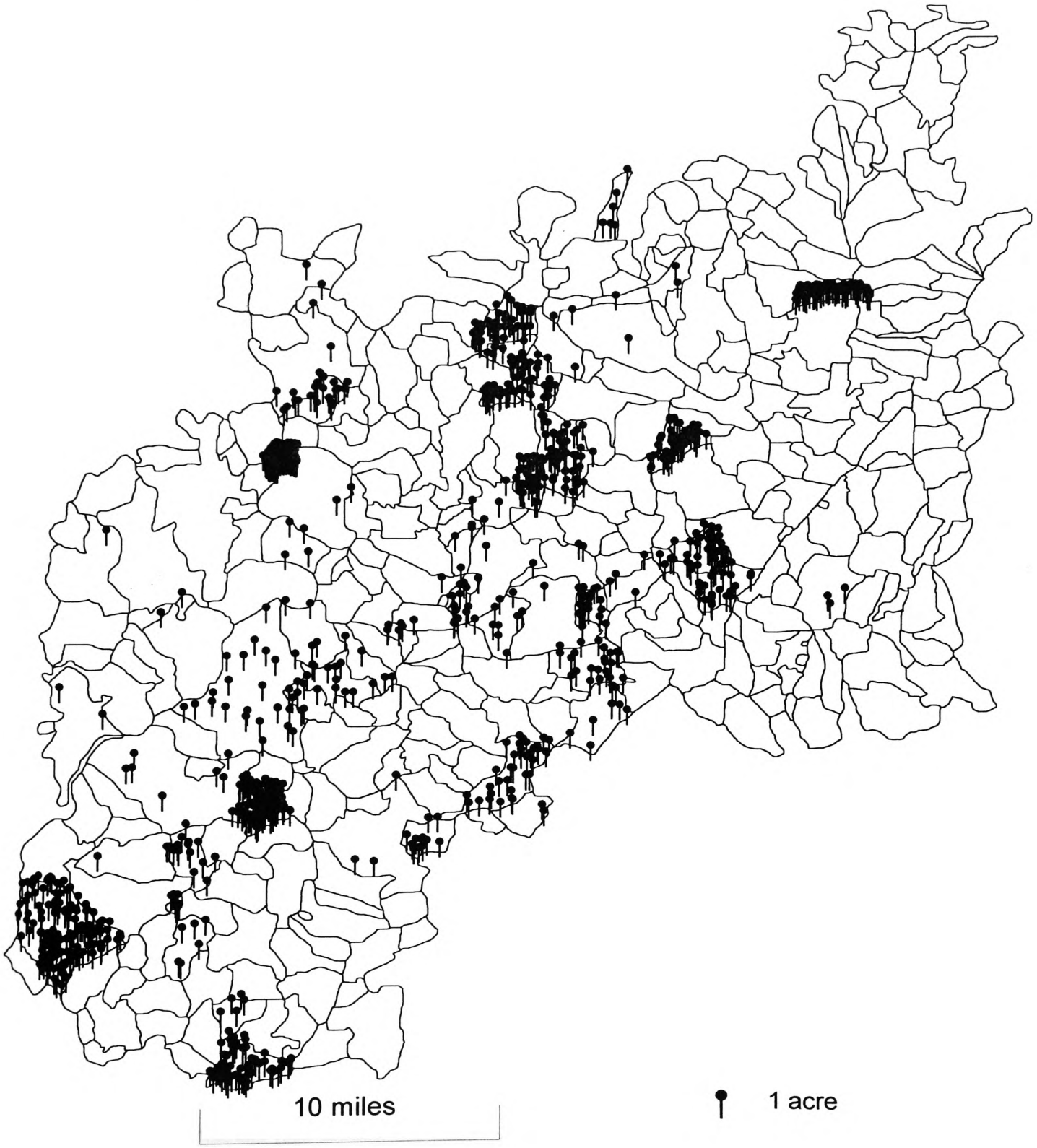
[181] PRO: CP25/1/75/38/213.

[182] R. E. Glasscock, 'England *circa* 1334', *A New Historical Geography of England before 1600*, ed., H. C. Darby, (Cambridge, 1976), p. 166.

G39: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



G40: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1303-1352.



Dean was one of the most important of those areas and the various restrictions imposed by the Crown would have inhibited large-scale settlement.

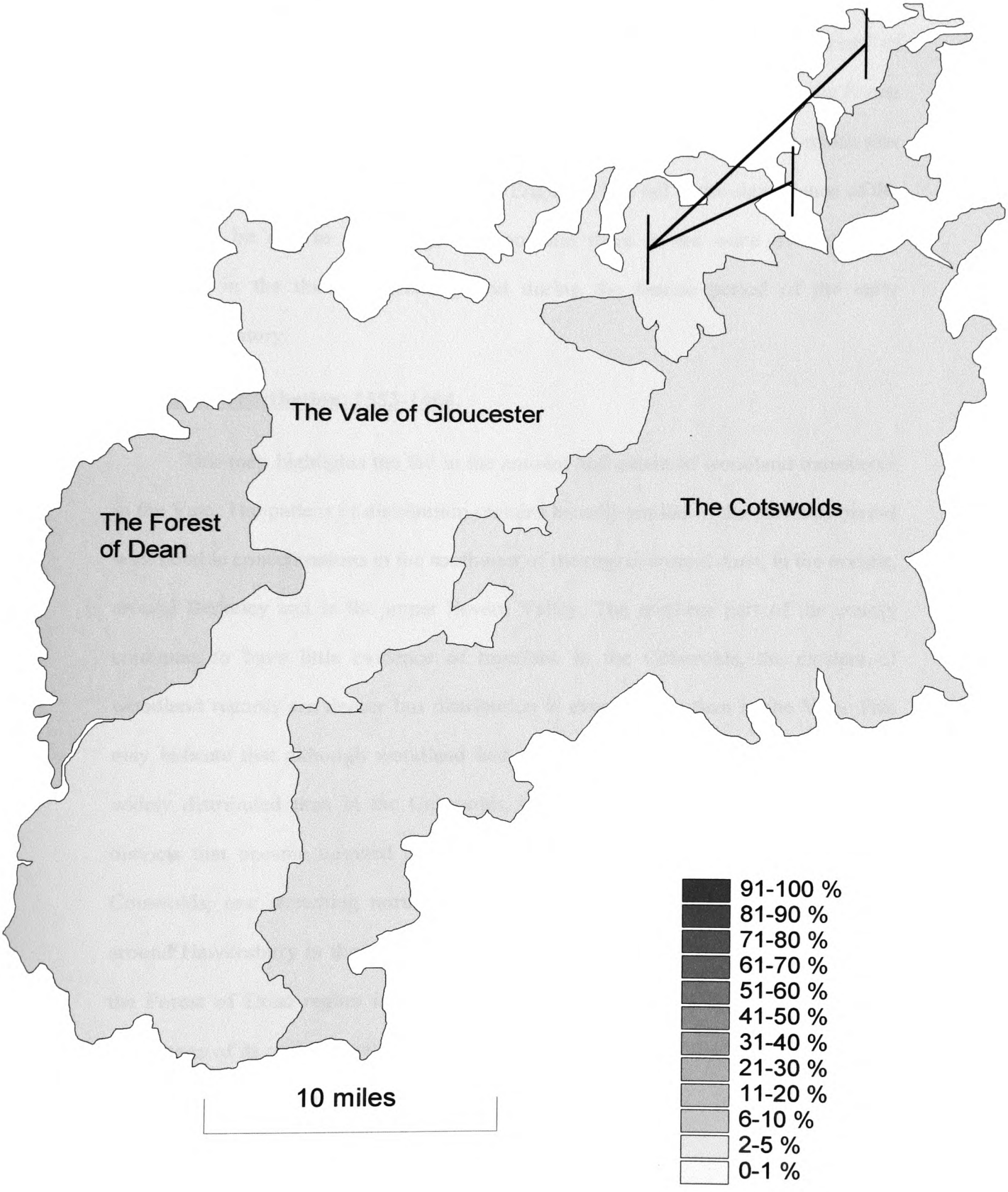
Map G40: Distribution: 1303-1352.

Despite the relatively similar percentages of woodland recorded in the Cotswolds and the Vale, distribution is much more widespread in the Vale; over a quarter of the parishes in the Vale have records of woodland transfers in this period compared to just 11% of the Cotswold parishes. The land market was at its most active in the Vale during this period (see map G9 above). This seems to signify that reaction to the upheavals of the early fourteenth century was more apparent in the Vale in this period than in the other parts of the county. Within the Vale, most of the transfers are in the south, particularly along the Severn Valley, and although distribution has increased, it follows a similar pattern to that apparent in map G38 with significant clusters around Berkeley and Badgeworth and Westbury-on-Trym. In the middle of the county the transfers apparent around Stroud in the previous period have continued, and have extended to the east of the Cotswolds region in a line from Rendcomb to Oldbury-on-the-Hill. The records associated with the northern edge of the Forest of Dean region are also apparent in this period, notably around Blaisdon (adjacent to Longhope) and have extended northwards to Taynton, Newent, Pauntly and Dymock. There are also some records associated with the interior of the region.

Map G41: Regional percentages, 1353-1404.

The most significant rise has been in the Forest of Dean region with woodland accounting for almost 5% of the total land transferred there. It has been suggested that in the fourteenth century evidence of new settlement in Gloucestershire was often in woodland districts (see section 6.2 above). There has also been a notable change in

G41: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.

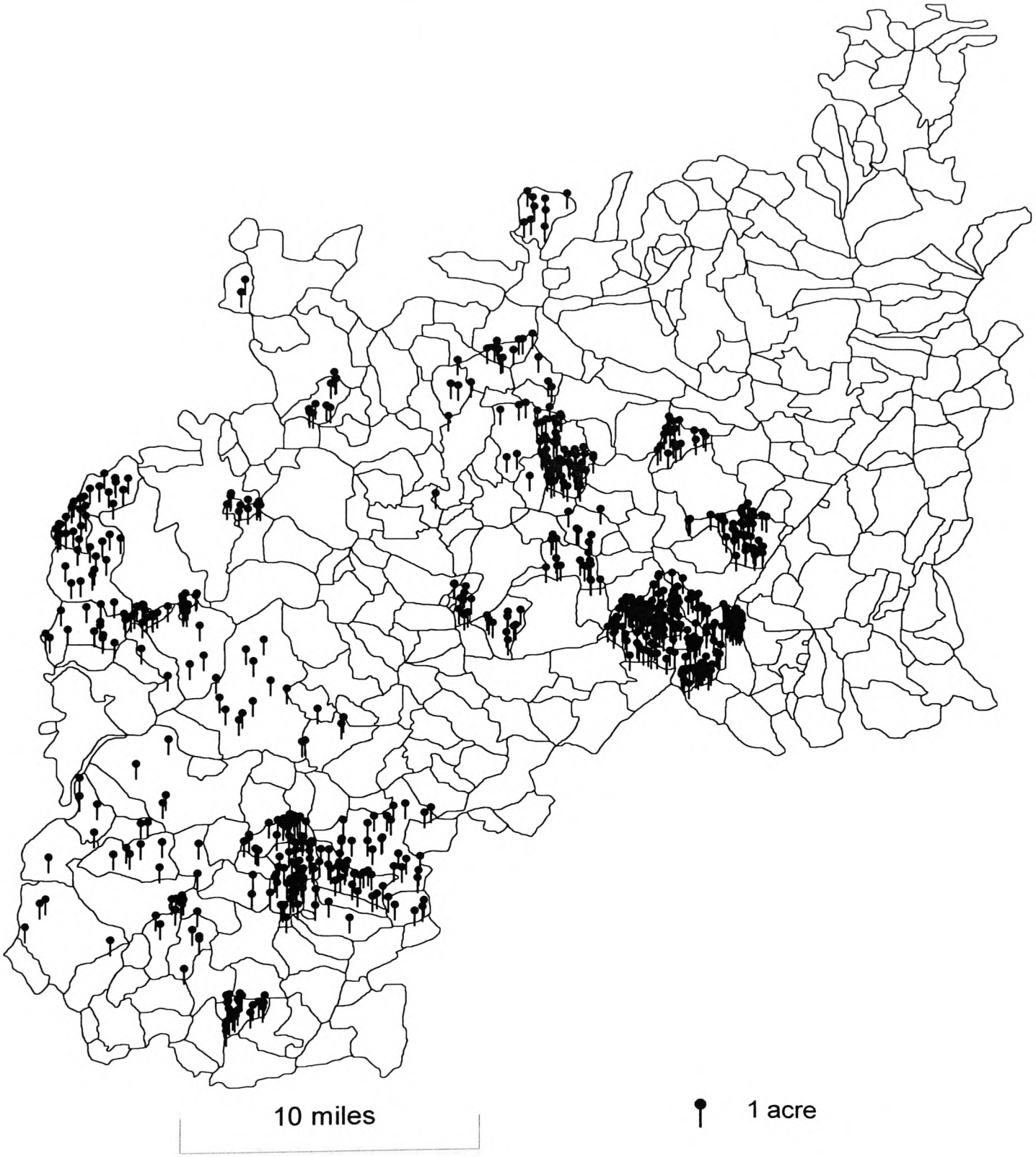


the situation in the other two regions with the Cotswolds now having a higher percentage of recorded woodland than the Vale (4.5% as opposed to 3%). It is possible that new settlement was occurring in the more marginal districts of Gloucestershire during this period; it could be that the natural resources of the Forest of Dean, for example, were being more highly regarded during this period which saw great changes to the agrarian landscape of England. The fall in the significance of the Vale could be due to a shortage of woodland there in the wake of wide-scale clearances in the thirteenth century and during the famine period of the early fourteenth century.

Map G42: Distribution, 1353-1404.

This map highlights the fall in the amount and extent of woodland transferred in the Vale. The pattern of distribution remains broadly similar to the previous period with notable concentrations in the southwest of the region around Aust, in the middle, around Berkeley and in the upper Severn Valley. The northern part of the county continues to have little evidence of transfers. In the Cotswolds, the clusters of woodland records are denser but distribution is even sparser than in the Vale. This may indicate that although woodland had diminished in the Vale it was still more widely distributed than in the Cotswolds, which had important clusters in certain districts that became targeted at this time. Two main centres are apparent in the Cotswolds, one stretching northwards and westwards from Cirencester, the other around Hawkesbury in the southeast of the region. The much greater significance of the Forest of Dean region in terms of woodland is indicated by the much higher percentage of its parishes with records of transfers than in the other two regions (40% as opposed to 12% in the Cotswolds and 18% in the Vale).

G42: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1353-1404.



Map G43: Regional percentages, 1405-1455.

The fall in the overall percentage of woodland transferred, apparent in the later fourteenth century, continues in this period. There is less distinction between the percentages of woodland transferred in the three regions; all have figures ranging between 3% and 4%. This may indicate a fall in the amount of woodland available for transfer on a countywide basis and, perhaps, a fall in the extent of new settlement due to the high mortality rates of the fourteenth century.

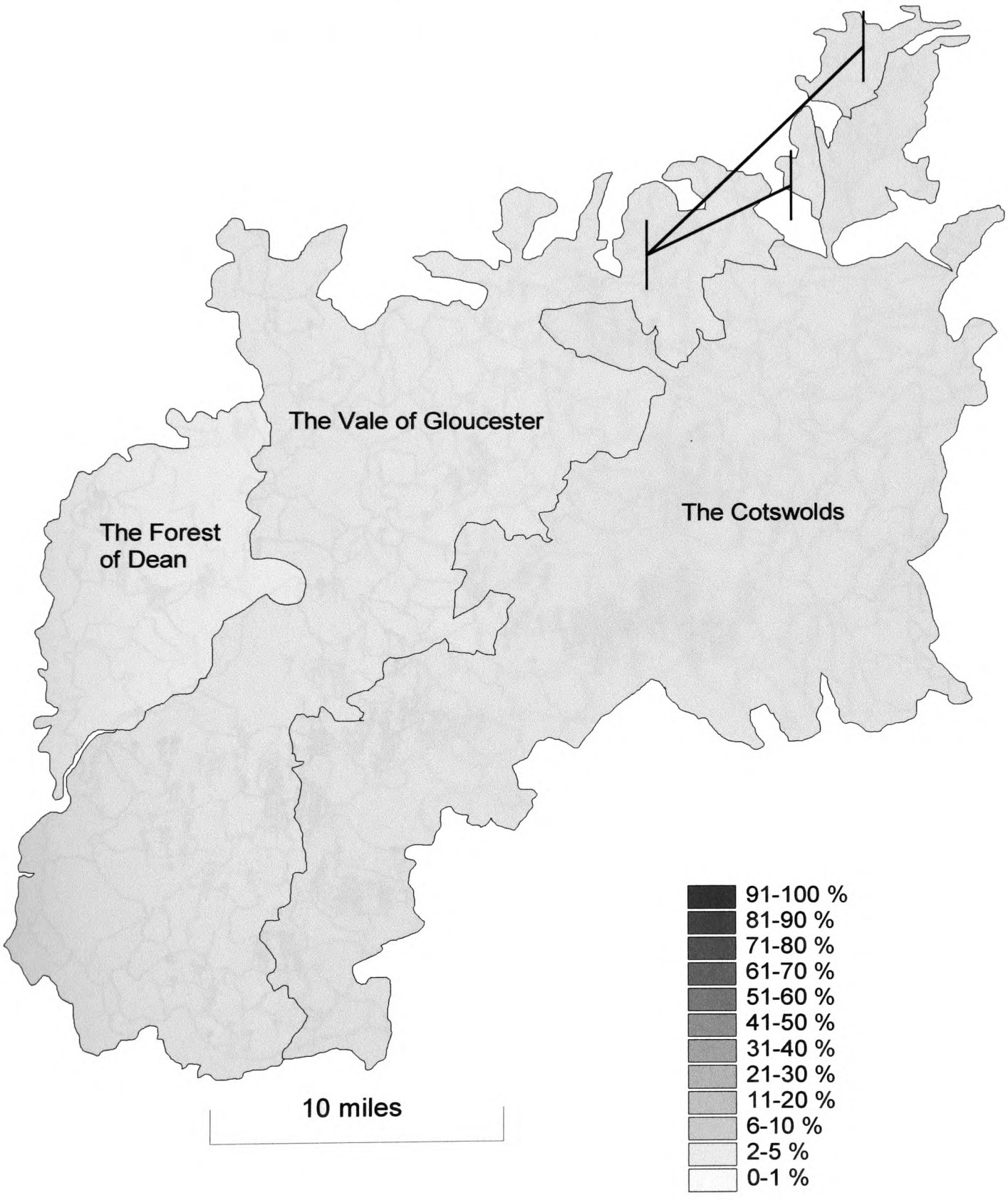
Map G44: Distribution, 1405-1455.

Despite the fall in the percentage of woodland transferred there is a slight rise in the number of parishes with records of transfers in the Vale and the Cotswolds. This indicates that slighter smaller amounts of wood were being transferred over a wider area in these two regions. The overall pattern is broadly similar to the fourteenth century with very little evidence for the north of the county and clusters of data around Cirencester, Berkeley and in the south of the county. Although there has been a fall in distribution in the Forest of Dean, this region still has a much higher percentage of its parishes containing woodland records than in the other regions.

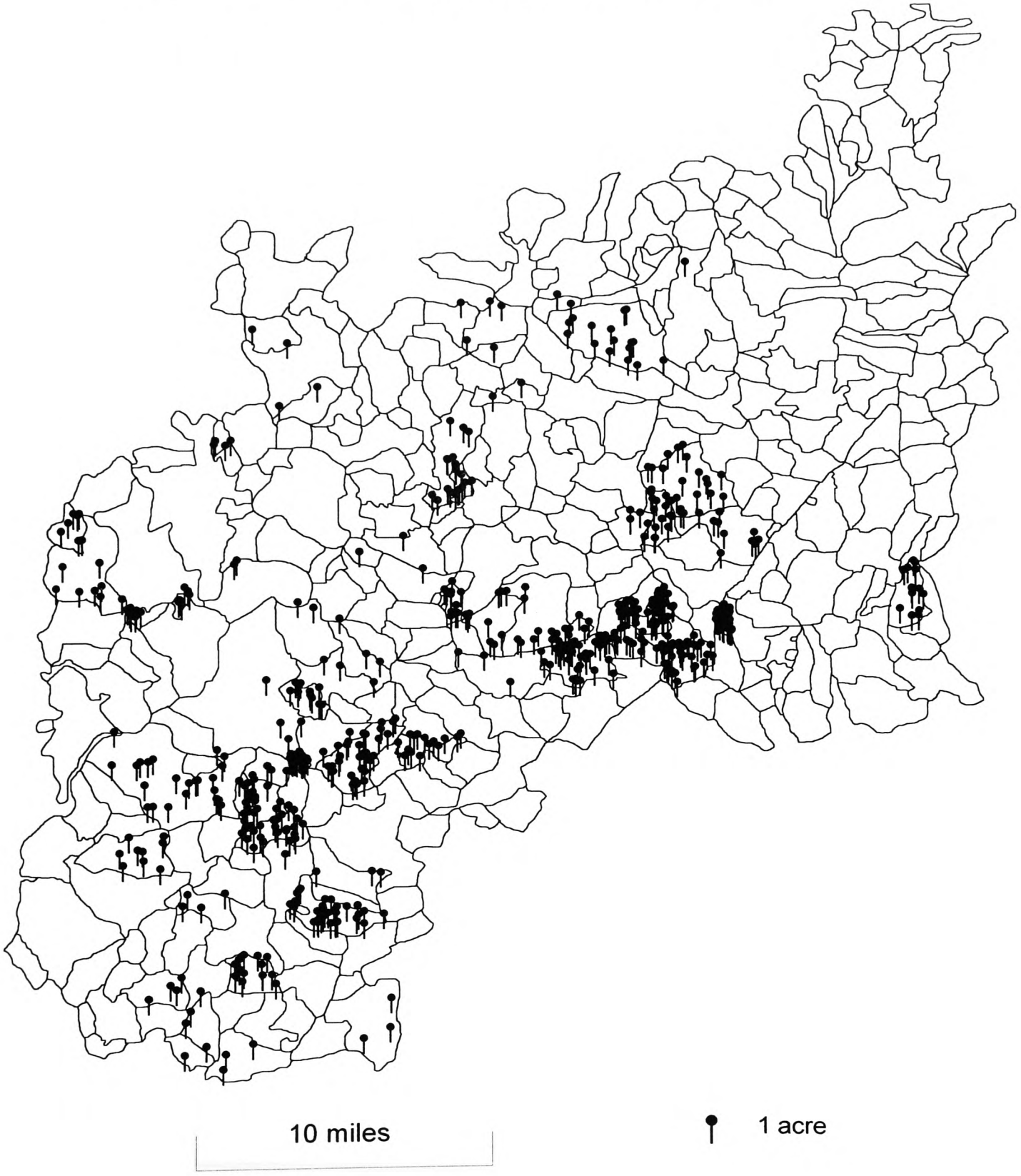
Map G45: Regional percentages, 1456-1508.

There is a notable fall in the number of fines issued during this period but a dramatic rise in the average area of woodland conveyed per transaction (see table G3). Therefore, the evidence from a single document can have an important impact on the dataset. The Cotswolds region has by far the highest percentage of woodland transferred (8%), followed by the Forest of Dean region (5%) and then the Vale (4.5%). The main reason for the dominance of the Cotswolds is the transfer of some very high acreages in certain districts. For example, the dense cluster apparent in map

G43: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



G44: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1405-1455.



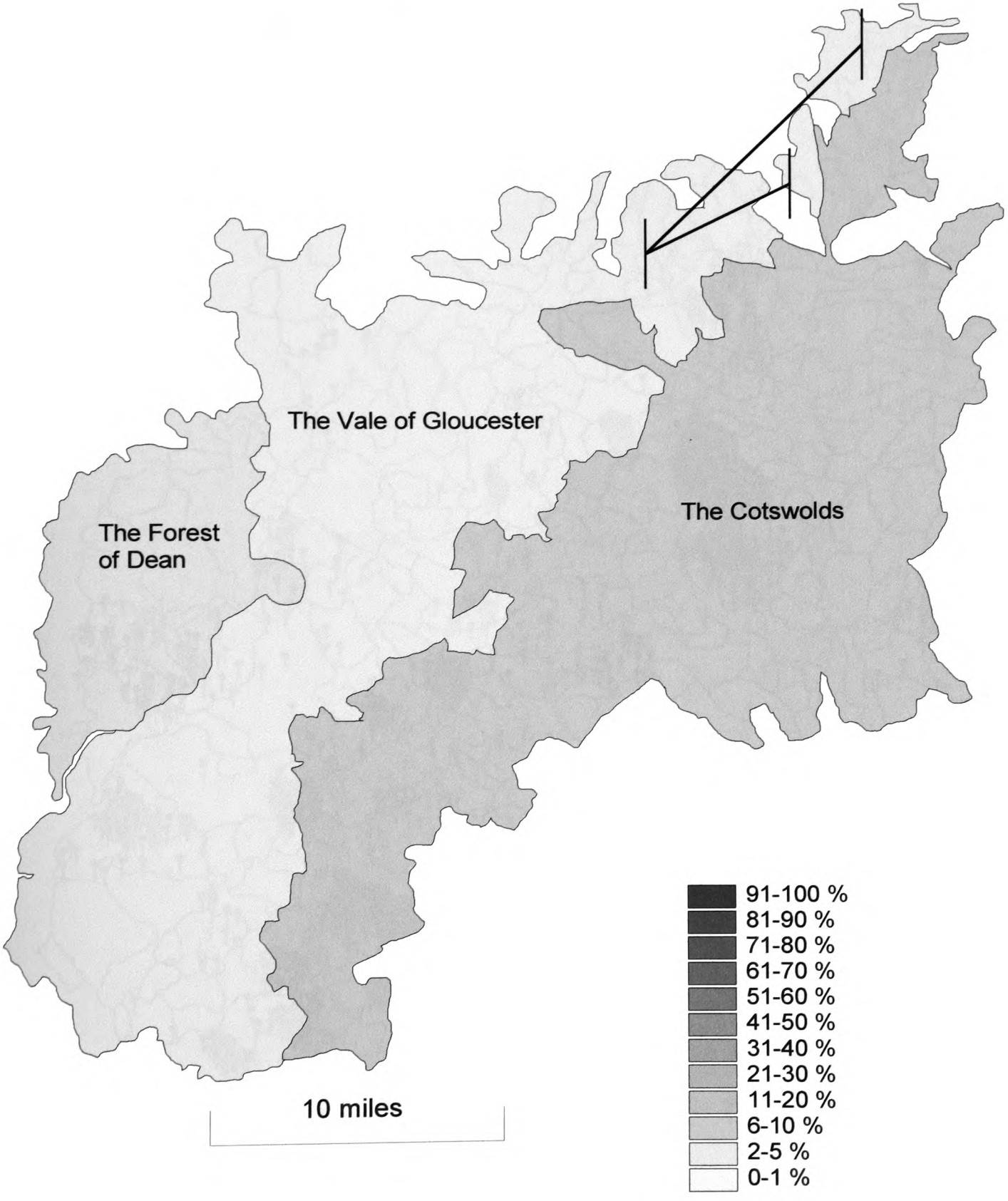
G46 below in the extreme southeast of the region is primarily due to one fine, issued in 1464, and concerning the transfer 500 acres of wood, along with a hundred messuages, 30 tofts, 20 carucates of arable 200 acres of meadow and 500 acres of pasture, in the adjacent parishes of Tormarton, Acton Turville and West Littleton, from Thomas Vacholl and his wife, Agnes, to a consortium consisting of two grocers from London, Thomas Young and John Young, and two Bristol merchants, Thomas Hoare and Philip Mede.[183] Such a document could be indicative of a period of new settlement in the Cotswolds, associated with the rise in the importance of this region to the booming textile industry of the later Middle Ages. It is possible that entrepreneurs were obtaining large estates in the region at this time as they sought to profit from the industry. The dominance of the Cotswolds in terms of the percentage of wood recorded can be explained by the massive rise in the activity of the land market (as suggested by map G12 above) and a distinct change in the economy of Gloucestershire in the later Middle Ages.

Map G46: Distribution, 1456-1508.

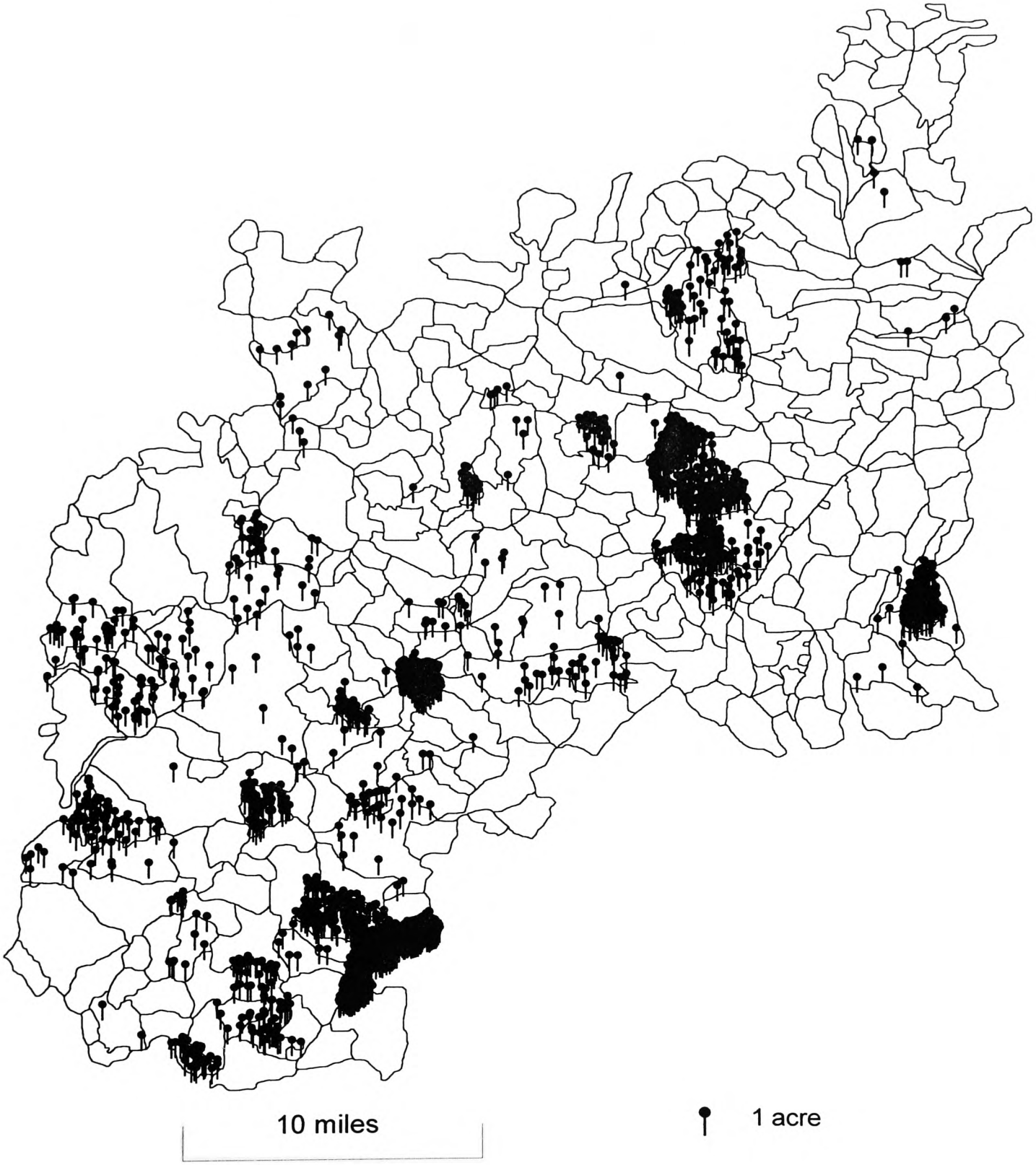
Despite the much higher percentage of woodland recorded in the Cotswolds, in terms of distribution there is a familiar pattern apparent with just a fifth of its parishes having evidence of woodland transfers compared to a quarter of the Vale's parishes and a third of the Forest of Dean's. This fact is revealed by this map which shows dense clusters in the Cotswolds in a few in a few distinct areas such as around Tormarton in the south and around Rendcomb, north of Cirencester. Distribution is a little more widespread in the Vale, particularly in the south of the region and there is a distinct group of parishes with records in the south of the Forest of Dean region.

[183] PRO: CP25/1/79/93/8.

G45: Regional percentages of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.



G46: Distribution of wood recorded in the feet of fines, 1456-1508.



The data indicates that woodland was being transferred in higher acreages in the Cotswolds than in the other regions, often as part of the transfer of a large estate and associated with the rise in the importance of this region in the later Middle Ages. The rise in activity in the Forest of Dean may also be associated with a change in the fortunes of that area as the restrictions imposed by its forest status were relaxed and there was greater impetus for people to experiment with its distinctive and diverse economy.

6.7 People and property

A table of 8480 people recorded in the Gloucestershire fines has been produced. This compares with 4823 recorded in Herefordshire and 4753 in Shropshire. The table consists of plaintiffs and deforciants, their spouses and family members, tenants and attorneys. As in the other counties the amount of detail in individual fines can vary greatly. For example, in Bristol in 1247 a fine was issued recording the transfer of a messuage in Bristol from William, son of Walter, to Walter de Paunts.[184] In contrast, a fine issued in Gloucester in 1260, records the transfer of free tenements from Master Nicholas de Preston, the prior of the church of St. Mary of Suthington to a whole list of plaintiffs, including, Walter the clerk and his wife Matilda, Richard de Turtleton and his wife Stalasica, Cristina, the wife of Stephen Payn, Ralph Bonaventure and his wife, Joan, Juliana, the wife of Richard, son of Ralph, Richard de Wisham, Nicholas Haring and his wife Alice and Juliana de la Leigh.[185] The people involved in the transactions can appear very modest such as the Willam le Norys who obtained a messuage in Gloucester from Robert Rose in

[184] PRO: CP25/1/74/20/402.

[185] PRO: CP25/1/74/26/597.

1277,[186] or they can involve the most important people in the country, such as in 1279, when King Edward I and Eleanor, his Queen Consort, obtained a manor in Gloucestershire from John de Basil.[187]

As noted in earlier chapters, messuages are frequently mentioned in the feet of fines. In Gloucestershire, as in the other counties, they often appear as part of a transfer of a variety of land types in a rural context. For example, in 1276, Henry son of Hugh de Brickhampton obtained a messuage along with one and a half virgates of arable, and seven acres of meadow in Brickhampton from Walter de Shipton and his wife, Beatrice.[188] When messuages appear on their own, without land, they are usually in an urban setting. In 1254, for instance, Herbert le Mercer obtained a messuage in the suburb of Gloucester from William le Forester and his wife, Sarah.[189] Map G47 shows the distribution of messuages throughout the county. There are heavy concentrations around Gloucester and Bristol with more minor groupings around Tewkesbury, and Tetbury. Overall distribution is fairly widespread, with the centre of the Forest of Dean standing out as a very sparsely covered region. The following table reveals the parishes with the highest concentrations.

Table G4: Highest concentrations of messuages, 1199-1508.

Gloucester 338	Bristol 293	Tetbury 90	Tewkesbury 80
Berkeley 77	Down Hatherley 58	Chipping Campden 56	Winchcomb 51
West Littleton 50	Weston-on-Avon 46	Henbury 45	Wotton Under Edge 44

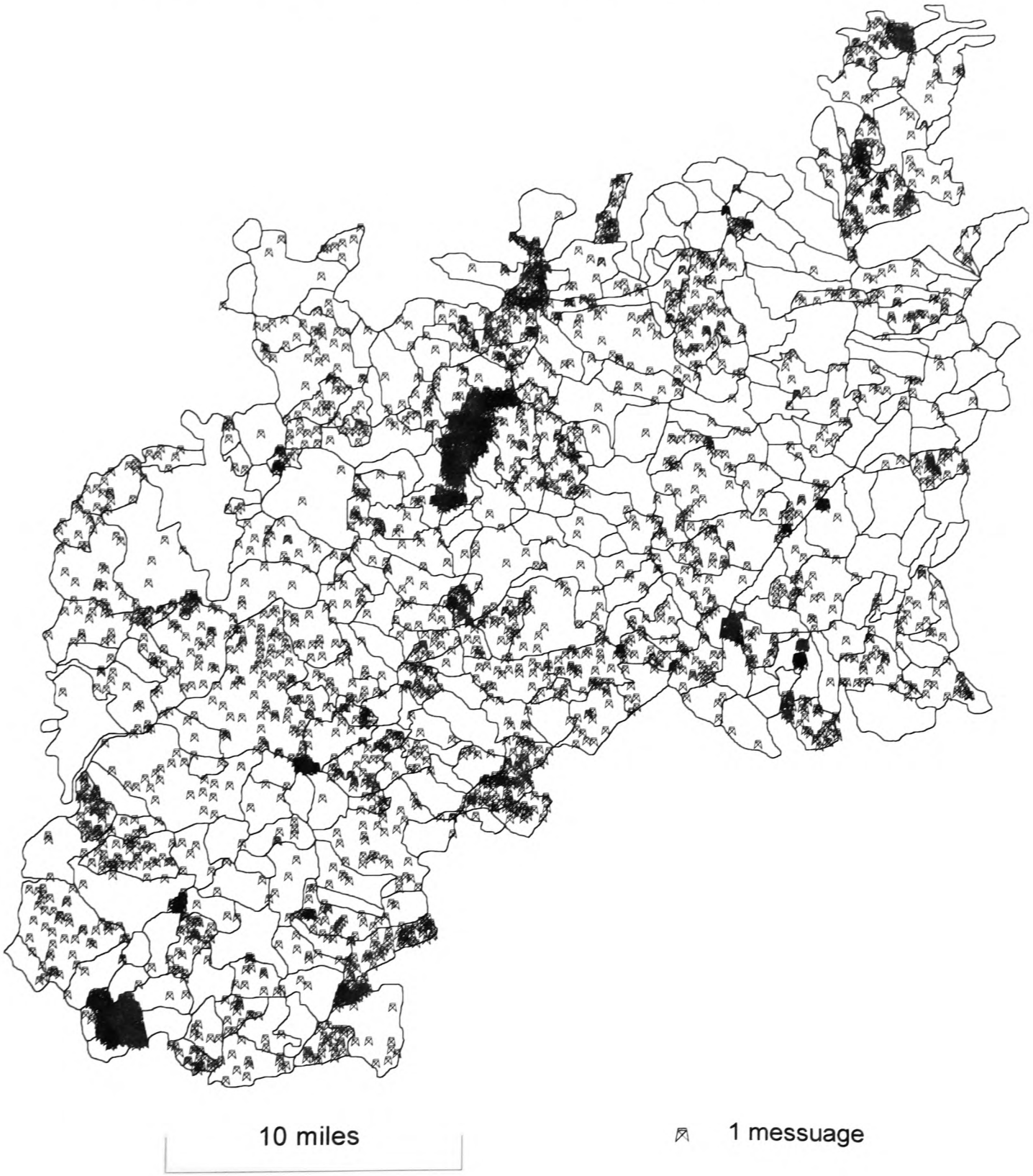
[186] PRO: CP25/1/75/31/35.

[187] PRO: CP25/1/75/31/49.

[188] PRO: CP25/1/75/31/26.

[189] PRO: CP25/1/74/20/423.

G47: Total messuages recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



In total there are 3666 messuages recorded in the fines for Gloucestershire. This is much greater than the 1746 recorded in Shropshire and the 1256 in Herefordshire. There are 75 parishes with over ten messuages recorded in Gloucestershire which compares with 46 in Shropshire and 29 in Herefordshire. Indeed, there are 37 parishes with over 20 messuages recorded. Of the places mentioned in table G4 above, all but four appear in Beresford and Finberg's *Handlist*.[190] They are Down Hatherley, West Littleton, Weston-on-Avon and Henbury. The first three of these places are influenced by a few unusual transactions in which large numbers of messuages were recorded. For example, 39 of the 58 messuages recorded for Down Hatherley were transferred in one fine of 1317 which also records two mills, eight carucates of arable, 37 acres of meadow, 25 acres of pasture and 18 acres of wood, obtained from John de Bures and his wife, Hawisia, by John de Armesley and his wife, Lucia.[191] Furthermore, all of the messuages mentioned in West Littleton were recorded in two related transactions involving a number of parishes in the area: Tormarton, Littleton, West Littleton and Acton Turville. The first occurred in 1457 and involved the transfer of a hundred messuages, 30 tofts, 20 carucates of arable, 200 acres of meadow, 500 acres of pasture and 500 acres of wood from Maurice Delaryver and his wife, Joan, to the knight, John Fortestin, the merchant Thomas Young and to William Venour.[192] The second was in 1464 and has been mentioned in relation to map G45 above. Weston-on-Avon was also influenced by an individual transaction in 1323 which involved 25 messuages.[193] Therefore, these three parishes can be said to be present in table G4 because of a few

[190] M. W. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg, *English Medieval Boroughs: A Handlist*, (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.111-117.

[191] PRO: CP25/1/76/49/195.

[192] PRO: CP25/1/79/92/143.

[193] PRO: CP25/1/76/53/300.

abnormal documents. In contrast, the messuages recorded in Henbury parish were recorded in a number of more typical fines which were issued throughout the whole period covered by the dataset.

None of the four non-burghal places recorded in the table show any sign of having landless messuages associated with them and therefore cannot be considered "minimal boroughs" of the type suggested by Britnell.[194] A further analysis of all the places in fines that are not mentioned in table G4 but have records of 20 or more messuages has been undertaken. There are 25 such places, four of which are described as boroughs in the *Handlist*: Newent, Thornbury, Cirencester and Fairford. The remaining places: Lydney, Aust, Olveston, Winterbourne, Cold Ashton, Tormarton, Acton Turville, Old Sodbury, Hawkesbury, Nympsfield, Stroud, Sapperton, Churchdown, Badgeworth, Rendcomb, Down Ampney, Great Rissington, Kemberton, Aston Subedge, Deerhurst and Bishops Cleeve, were examined for evidence of landless messuages. There was just one parish with such evidence that can be considered comprehensive: the parish of Lydney on the western side of the River Severn, in the Forest of Dean region. The only other places with any evidence of this sort were Deerhurst, in which a messuage was transferred in 1220 from William de Derneford to Reginald de Aga and John de Stevenage,[195] and in Thornbury, in which a messuage and a garden were transferred to Robert Haukyns de Thornbury from Laurence de Iron Acton.[196] Although the latter transfer cannot really be considered as evidence of a place with a landless messuage, due to the mention of a garden, there are a few transactions, associated with this place, which record very small amounts of

[194] R. H. Britnell, 'Burghal characteristics of market Towns in Medieval England', *Durham University Journal*, 73, (1981), pp. 147-151.

[195] PRO: CP25/1/73/4/11.

[196] PRO: CP25/1/78/81/98.

land in conjunction with messuages. This could indicate the beginnings of a minimal borough in Thornbury. For example, in 1404 Robert Piers obtained two messuages and one acre of arable there from John Baker.[197]

When the analysis mentioned above was undertaken, it was discovered that there was a great deal of activity taking place in the parish of Lydney, although relatively low percentages of land were being transferred there. In 1268 a transaction between John de Aust and William de Morecote was concerned with 20/- rent in Lydney. Similarly, in 1316, two consecutive documents record rent in Lydney and nothing else.[198] There is also extensive evidence of the transfer of landless messuages, such as in a fine, issued in York in 1302, which records the transfer of a messuage and a mill in Lydney and Purton (Lydney) from Adam de Lucas, an attorney acting on behalf of Sibilla de Bruneshope, to Walter de Bruneshope, via his attorney, John de Barewe. Also, in 1362, Walter Reyne de Lydney obtained a messuage and nothing else in Lydney from Walter Willekyns de Lydney.[199] In 1392, a fine recording the transfer of the manor of Nass (in the parish of Lydney) also records the transfer of six messuages, two mills and 30/- rent in Lydney and Newarne (in the adjacent parish of West Dean), from William Bakester de Lydney to Richard Godefelagh and Roger Myry.[200] Furthermore, in 1429 John Cadull and his wife, Matilda, obtained a single messuage in Lydney from Thomas Ely and his wife, Isabella.[201]

There are some fines which record the transfer of land in Lydney but they are, generally, quite distinctive in terms of the amount and type of land mentioned. For

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[197] PRO: CP25/1/79/84/20.

[198] PRO: CP25/1/76/49/178; PRO: CP25/1/76/49/179.

[199] PRO: CP25/1/78/73/427.

[200] PRO: CP25/1/78/82/105.

[201] PRO: CP25/1/79/88/27.

example, in 1437, John Cadull (probably the same man mentioned above) along with William Nayler and John Verney obtained a messuage, a garden and one and a half acres of arable in Lydney, from Robert Hitches de Lydney and his wife, Alicia.[202] Also, in 1480 John Raynold de Purton and John Taillour de Lydney obtained five messuages, two tofts, a water-mill, 40 acres of arable, an acre of meadow and 4d rent in Lydney, Purton (in Lydney) and in the adjacent parish of Blakeney.[203] Another fine issued in 1480, and mentioned in relation to map G36 above, records the transfer of a messuage, a garden, a water-mill and 43 acres of pasture in Lydney, Newarne (West Dean) and Whitecroft (Newland).[204]

The evidence suggests that Lydney may have developed a status as a minimal borough in the Middle Ages. Its situation on the western bank of the River Severn and on the line of the main Roman road from Gloucestershire into Wales would have ensured its importance as a district linking the Severn Valley with the Forest of Dean. The frequent mention of watermills in the fines for Lydney suggest that it was an important milling centre and its proximity to the heavily wooded section of the Dean region along with its location on the river, would have made it a natural choice as a market place for woodland commerce.

Gloucester and Bristol have by far the greatest numbers of messuages mentioned and are indicative of this type of property in an urban context. The prominence of Tetbury in table G4 is partially explained by two related transactions, which may involve the same property, issued at different times. The first, in 1474, involved the transfer of 16 messuages, 12 tofts, 300 acres of arable, 40 acres of

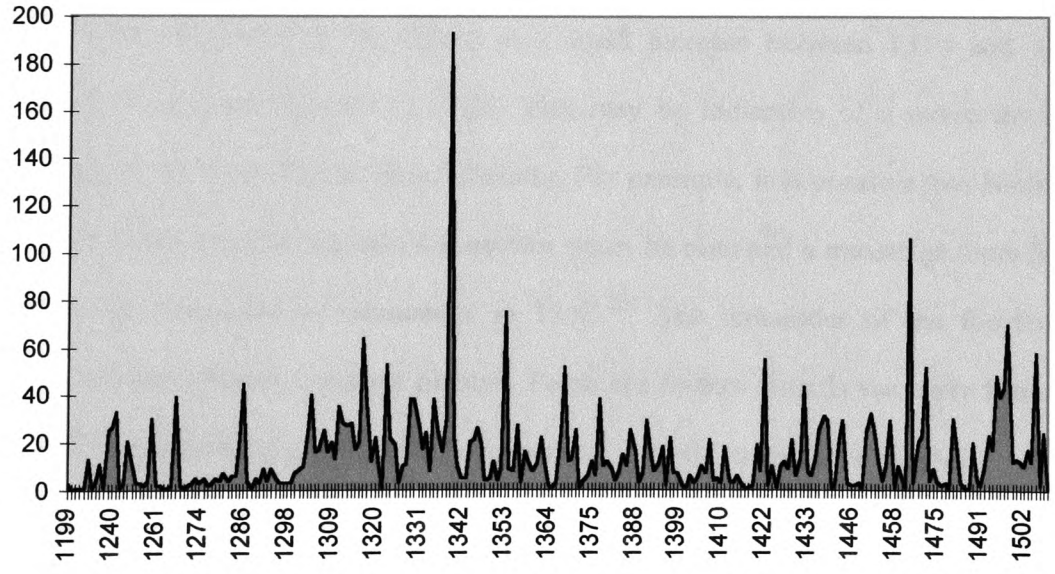
[202] PRO: CP25/1/79/89/69.

[203] PRO: CP25/1/79/94/52.

[204] PRO: CP25/1/79/94/51.

meadow and 100 acres of pasture in Tetbury and the surrounding area, from Henry Ketelby to Edmund Tame and Robert Hucheman.[205] The second, in 1505, mentions the same amount of land and property and involves some of the same personal names, although a certain William Lymeryk appears to be disposing of the property and a clerk called Robert John is involved as one of the plaintiffs.[206] These two documents have had a major influence on the Tetbury district in terms of the amount of messuages (and tofts) recorded there and this needs to be considered when consulting table G4. The following graphs reveal some interesting features. Graph G7 shows a significant group of transfers in the first half of the fourteenth century. Graphs G8 and G9 highlight the situation in the two main urban centres of Gloucestershire.

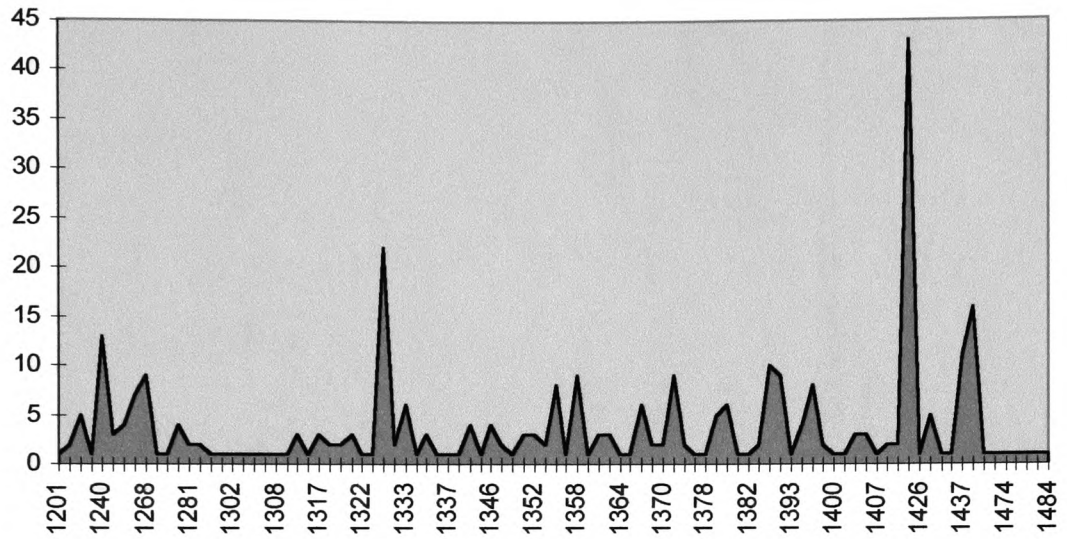
Graph G7: Messuages in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



[205] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/45.

[206] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/70.

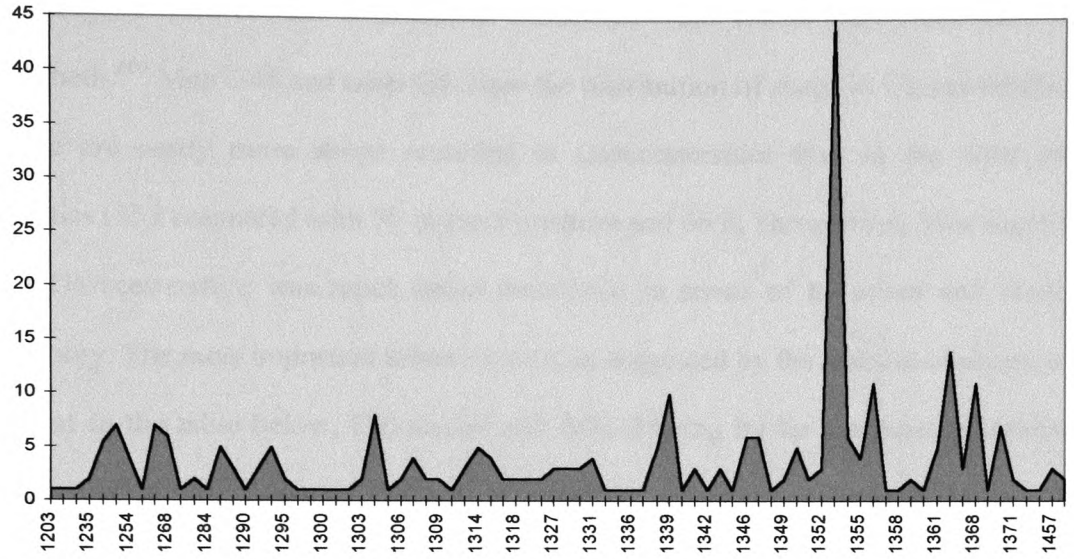
Graph G8: Messuages in Gloucester.



This graph indicates a rise in transfers in Gloucester in the thirteenth century which falls off around 1300. There is a small increase between 1315 and 1322 followed by a great increase *c.* 1330. This may be indicative of a move towards urbanism in the face of agricultural disaster. For example, it is possible that Nicholas de Stoke Edith was moving into Gloucester when he obtained a messuage there from Stephen de Grandene de Gloucester in 1333.[207] The remainder of the fourteenth century reveals a more constant picture. There are further rises in the early fifteenth century. The following graph allows comparison with the situation in Bristol.

[207] PRO: CP25/1/77/60/105.

Graph G9: Messuages in Bristol.



This graph shows significant differences and suggests that processes in Bristol were fundamentally different from those in Gloucester. There is a fall in transfers around 1300 followed by a small increase around the time of the famine, but by far the most significant rise appears around 1350 to 1356 and then again from 1360 to 1370. This may be related to the Black Death. It is likely that a large number of properties would have become available as a result of losses due to the plague. In the later fourteenth century there may have been an increased desire to obtain property in Bristol which was developing into one of the most important towns in late medieval England, if not Europe.

As has been seen, shops are an important sign of urban development. The first shops mentioned in the Gloucestershire fines were in the year 1229 when Basil son of Herbert, through his attorney, William de Killeby, obtained seven in Winchcomb

from Arnold de Boscha.[208] The last fine to mention shops was issued in 1484 when the widow, Augusta Brugges, along with Walter Brockhampton, Richard Russell, John Herthland (Snr.), William Cols and John Cols obtained three, along with a messuage, a dove-cot and a garden in Gloucester from Walter Berwe and his wife, Elizabeth.[209] Map G48 and table G5 show the distribution of shops in Gloucestershire. There are vastly more shops recorded in Gloucestershire than in the other two counties (353 compared with 79 in Herefordshire and 66 in Shropshire). This suggests that Gloucestershire was much more developed in terms of its urban and market economy. The most important urban centres, as suggested by the amount of shops, are set out in the table below, Gloucester and Bristol being by far the most prominent. The appearance of places such as Stroud is interesting because it shows that shops can be used to signify an important urban centre that has not been indicated by evidence of landless messuages.

Table G5: Shops

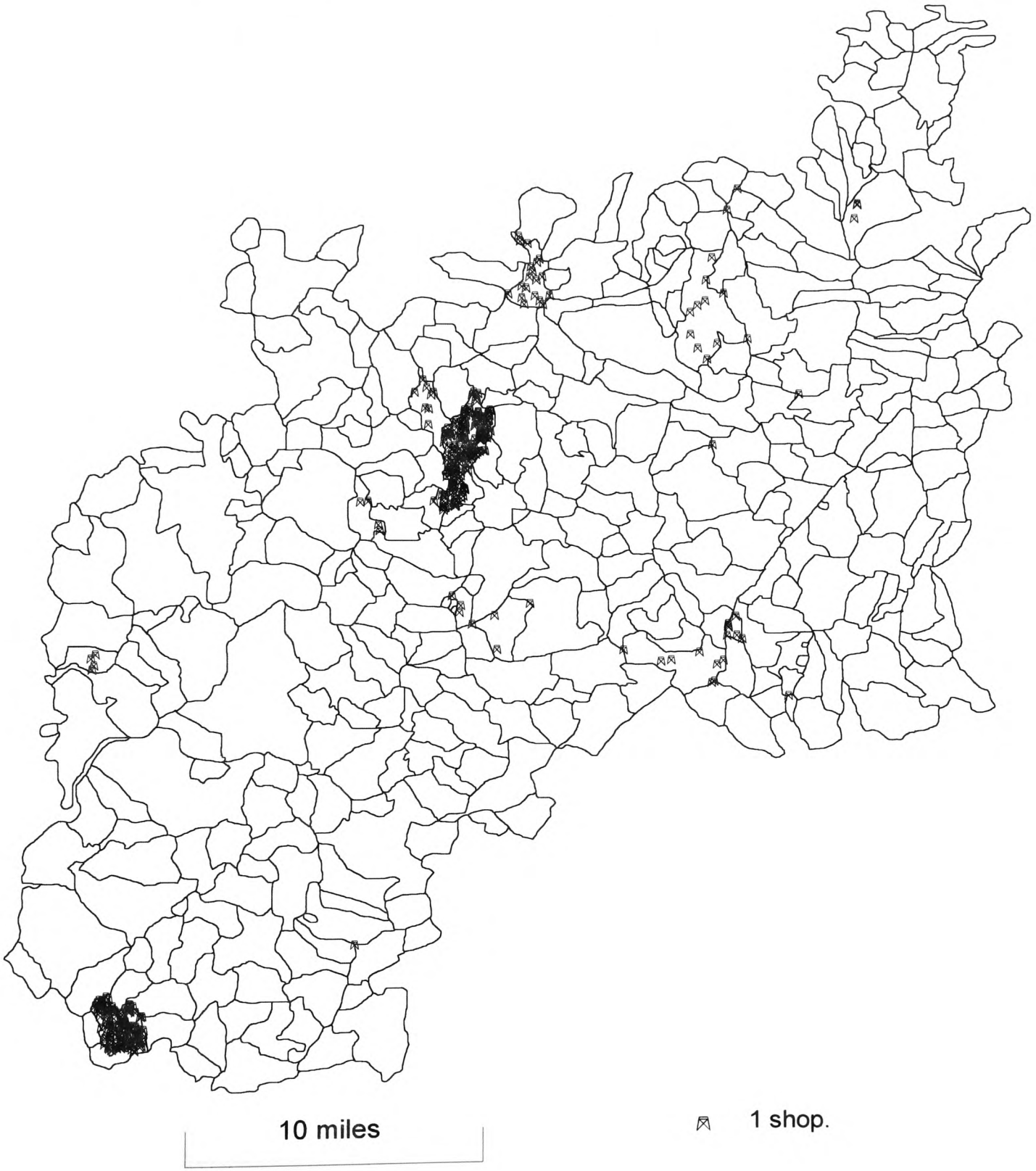
Gloucester 173	Bristol 120	Tewkesbury 19	Winchcomb 11	Maisemore 8
Cirencester 7	Longney 4	Hewelsfield 4	Stroud 3	Chipping. Campden 3

Map G49 shows the distribution of tofts. There are 321 mentioned in the Gloucestershire series in comparison with 188 in Shropshire and 124 in Herefordshire. The following table shows the most significant parishes in which tofts

[208] PRO: CP25/73/9/130.

[209] PRO: CP25/1/79/95/4.

G48: Total shops recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



are mentioned. The prominent position of Tetbury was due to two related transactions which have been discussed in relation to the messuages mentioned above.

Table G6: Tofts.

Tetbury 34	Fairford 28	Churchdown 19	Gloucester 17	Dowdeswell 10

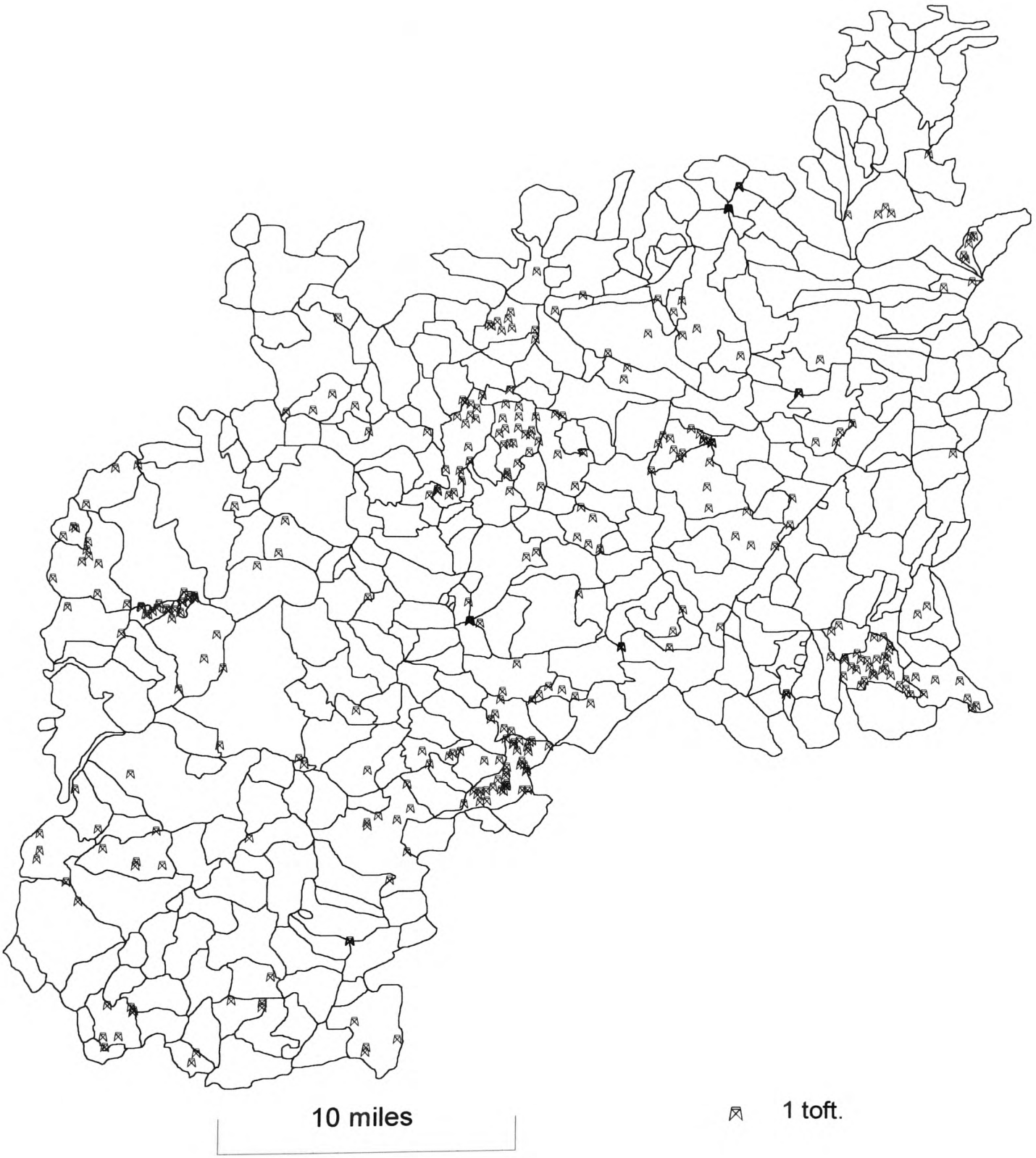
Map G50 shows the distribution of mills in Gloucestershire. There are 122 mills recorded in the Gloucestershire series. The highest concentrations are between the Rivers Coln and Churn in the Cotswolds; in the south western section of the Vale of Gloucester; near Down Hatherley in the northern Vale above Gloucester; and in the Forest of Dean, around Lydney. The first mill to be mentioned was in 1217 when Robert Wenris and his wife, Milisent, obtained a mill in Great Rissington from Henry de Crupes.[210] In the later fines, different types of mills are sometimes distinguished, such as the water-mills mentioned in a number of fines relating to Lydney (see above) and the fulling-mills, such as the one obtained, near Minchinhampton in 1495, by Thomas Davyes, along with two messuages, two gardens and three acres of arable, from John Dast and his wife, Alice.[211] Finberg has pointed out the importance of fulling mills to the Gloucestershire wool and cloth industry. He claims that the earliest recorded fulling mill in England was at Barton, near Temple Guiting, in 1185 and describes how the last abbot of Cirencester invested 700 marks in the construction of two such mills because of the importance of the cloth industry to that town.[212] The last

[210] PRO: CP25/1/73/4/1.

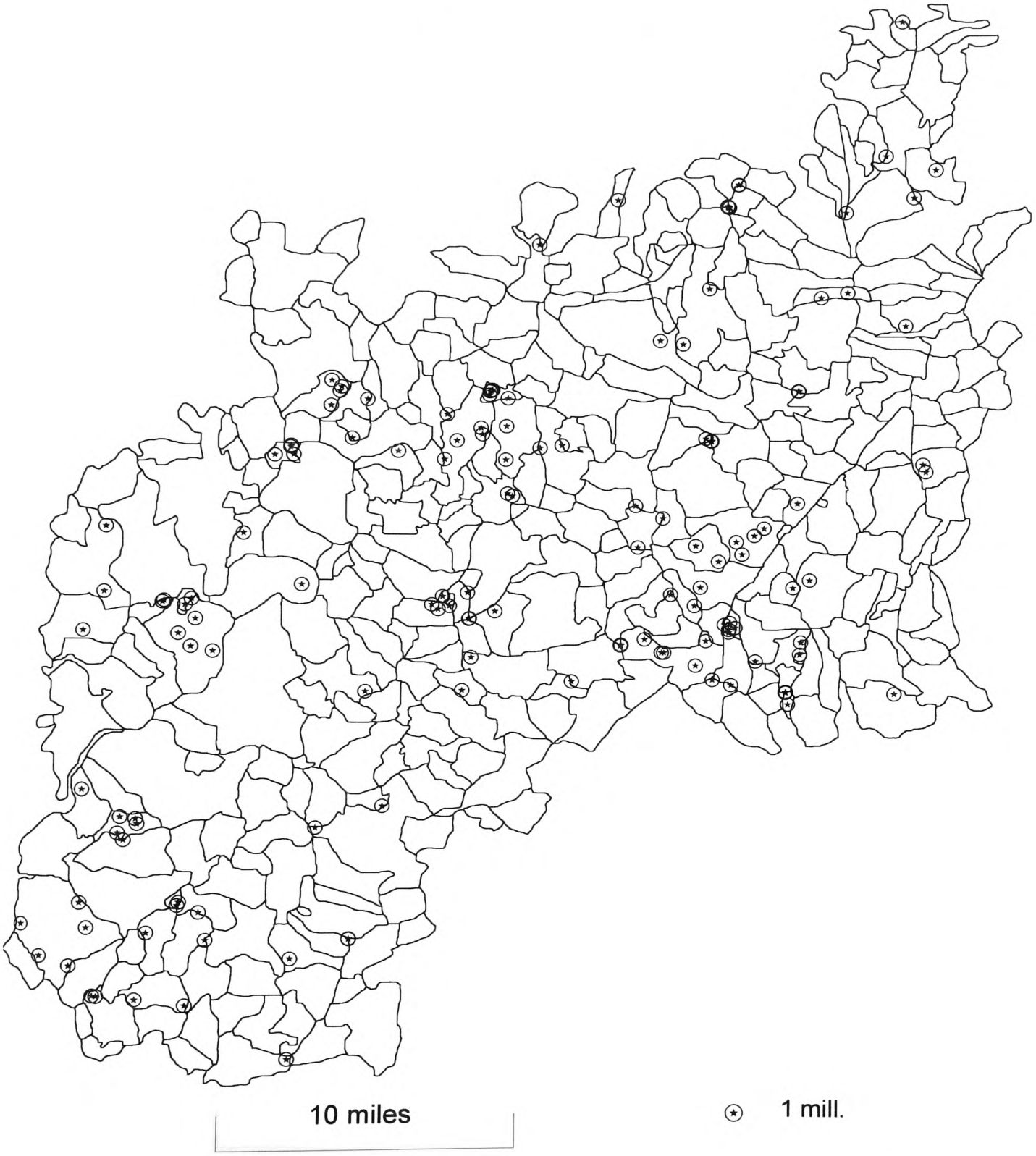
[211] PRO: CP25/1/79/96/21.

[212] Finberg, *op. cit.*, p. 67, 88. See also: Hilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-210.

G49: Total tofts recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



G50: Total mills recorded in the feet of fines, 1199-1508.



mention of a mill in fines was in 1507 when Simon Garcourt, John Hord, Edmund Bury and Robert Egerley obtained one, in conjunction with a messuage, a garden and three acres of meadow in the Hampnett district, from Richard Garcourt and his wife, Agnes.[213]

6.7(i) Welsh people in the Gloucestershire fines.

Despite the large number of people recorded in Gloucestershire in comparison to the other counties, the amount of people with Welsh connections is much fewer. There are just 14 people with obvious Welsh links mentioned in the whole period. For example, Howel, son of John ap Howel who obtained a messuage, three carucates of arable and 73/- 4d. rent in Newland, from John ap Howel and his wife, Erneburga in 1320.[214] This compares with 49 Herefordshire people and 33 Shropshire people with obvious Welsh connections. Similarly, while there are 30 people with possible or indirect Welsh connections in Gloucestershire, such as Richard le Barber de Cardiff, who surrendered a messuage in the suburbs of Bristol to Thomas Diggel de Bristol in 1324; this compares with a total of 99 in Herefordshire and 81 in Shropshire. Over half of the people with obvious Welsh links were recorded west of the River Severn. For example, John ap Ieaun ap Gwillim ap Adam de Monmouth and his wife, Joan, who, in 1443, surrendered two messuages, 21 acres of arable and one acre of meadow in Coleford to John Carpenter.[215] There are one or two notable exceptions, such as David ap Yenan de Gloucester, a chapman who, along with his wife, Margia, Thomas Lydney and his wife Agnes and Elena Felde de Gloucester, surrendered a messuage in

[213] PRO: CP25/1/79/97/75.

[214] PRO: CP25/1/76/52/251.

[215] PRO: CP25/1/79/90/97.

Gloucester to Robert Gilbard in 1402.[216] It seems likely that the majority of Welsh people living in Gloucestershire during the Middle Ages would have been concentrated in the area between the rivers Wye and Severn. Because much of this region was taken up by Royal Forest (which may have proved to be a more substantial barrier in physical and legal terms than in Archenfield, Herefordshire) it may follow that Welsh settlement was much more restricted in this district and, therefore, in Gloucestershire as a whole.

6.8: Conclusion.

Feet of fines were used throughout Gloucestershire in the period 1199-1508. In comparison to Herefordshire and Shropshire, the Gloucestershire data is much more extensive and is contained within three distinct regions. There were many more fines issued in the thirteenth century than in the other counties, which may be indicative of a greater degree of new settlement in Gloucestershire during this period. There was also a massive increase in activity in the early fourteenth century, particularly in the Vale of Gloucester, probably associated with the harvest failures and the famines of this era. The subsequent fall in activity in the later fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries suggests a significant fall in population. The noticeable increase in the percentage of fines issued in the Cotswolds region in the later Middle Ages is indicative of the rise in the importance of the wool industry in that region and the fall in the importance of arable farming. Diversification is also apparent in the Vale in this period with evidence of dairying along the banks of the River Severn. Furthermore,

[216] PRO: CP25/1/79/84/14.

the Forest of Dean appears to have undergone a period of growth due to the relaxation of forest legislation and an improvement in woodland industries.

There are many more people recorded in the Gloucestershire feet of fines than in Herefordshire and Shropshire. This suggests a higher population and a more fluid market for land (particularly in the thirteenth century). The fines relating to Gloucestershire reveal a much more important urban population than in Shropshire and Herefordshire. This is highlighted by the combined importance of two key centres, Gloucester and Bristol. Gloucester maintains its dominance throughout the period but Bristol is a close second. There are also a number of other towns with rising status in the county, such as Tewkesbury and Cirencester. The much greater numbers of fines issued in Gloucestershire than in the other counties suggest a higher population, a greater social mobility and a greater desire and impetus for new colonization. The greatest increase in the number of fines issued, in comparison with the other counties, was in the thirteenth century. This suggests that the circumstances that allowed new settlement were more conducive in Gloucestershire at this time. The more acute border status of the other counties may have hindered settlement prior to the Edwardian Conquest of Wales in the late thirteenth century. Gloucestershire is also nearer to Westminster than the other counties and may have adopted the new method of conveyance more readily than the other counties. There is more evidence of "minimal boroughs" in Gloucestershire although most of the evidence is associated with Lydney. There is less evidence of Welsh people in the Gloucestershire fines than in those for Herefordshire and Shropshire. This may be due to the physical and legal barrier represented by the Forest of Dean and the further boundary of the River Severn.

Chapter 7

Conclusion.

The main aims of this project were to establish the validity of feet of fines as a source for the study of landscape change and settlement patterns and to show how computer technology can be harnessed as a tool for their analysis. The study areas of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire were chosen to enhance the somewhat overlooked picture of medieval land use and settlement along the Welsh border. These counties were also chosen because there are very few published fines for these areas. Research using the full set of medieval fines would therefore provide an important new set of data for these counties.

7.1 The validity of fines

Fines have proved to be an ideal source for a study of this nature. Their relatively uniform nature has enabled a largedata set to be collected in a relatively short period of time. The resulting databases provide a vast amount of information about land use, property, place-names and personal names. It has been shown that fines were used by quite a broad cross-section of society. Since they record the transfer of land and property they can provide a wealth of information about changing trends in ownership and settlement patterns. The most interesting pattern to emerge from this study is the enormous increase in the amount of conveyances in the first half of the fourteenth century.

Close analysis has revealed an association between high numbers of conveyances and the period of the Great Famine of 1315-18. A correlation has also been discovered between areas where the amount of transfers were high and districts known to have been affected by the various crises of the early fourteenth century from the evidence of other sources, particularly the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*. Fines have emerged as an important source for the study of this period and can be used to suggest how the famine affected different regions. The high number of fines issued at this time suggests, paradoxically, a buoyant market for land and property. Arable transfers increased as people were forced to obtain land to grow corn as prices rose due to failed harvests. Woodland transfers increased in areas where pressures on arable were great and so marginal land was cleared and turned over to arable.

7.2 Computer technology

Without the use of digital technology a study of this kind would have been impossible for one person to complete in the same amount of time. Although the translation and transcription of the fines, the building of the databases and the creation of the digitized maps were very time consuming tasks, the rapid analysis and creation of graphs and statistics which the databases allowed and the easy production of large quantities of different maps from the original outline maps, meant that the later stages of the project progressed much more quickly than they would have done with traditional manual methods.

7.3 The three counties

Herefordshire

Feet of fines have proved to be a valuable source for the study of medieval Herefordshire. They have enabled a vastly increased dataset of place-names and personal names to be produced. They have allowed a study of land-use and settlement in the county for a large part of the Middle Ages. The research has suggested that arable remained the dominant land type conveyed in fines throughout the period. It is clear, however, that a more mixed agricultural regime was becoming established in the later fifteenth century, with the acreage of pasture growing. The data shows a great increase in the number of fines issued in the first half of the fourteenth century and there appears to be a correlation between the rise in the number of fines issued and the worst years of the famine of the early fourteenth century.

Overall, the greatest activity occurred along a distinct belt across the centre of the county. The small Woolhope Region had relatively high levels of activity from an early date and seems to have been a significant sub-region which may have experimented in pioneering forms of mixed farming from the thirteenth century. Settlement on the Western Border may have been restricted in the early thirteenth century but seems to have increased later in the century and continued throughout much of the fourteenth century. Indeed, the relatively high percentages of wood recorded in the western parts of Herefordshire (particularly Archenfield) in the thirteenth century appear to coincide with districts where evidence of assarting is known from other sources and is indicative, therefore, of new settlement at this time. This process may have continued in such districts

in the fourteenth century, as evidence of woodland transfers remained strong. During the early fourteenth century, there was a notable fall in activity on the Central Plain and a subsequent rise on the Eastern Plain and in the other more marginal parts of the county. This was a period of upheaval and the evidence may be indicative that the limits of cultivation and settlement had been reached on the traditionally well-populated Central Plain and that there was a subsequent rise in demand for land in the more marginal and border districts. The very low percentages of wood recorded there in the fourteenth century provide further evidence of this process. Later in the fourteenth century there was a rise in arable transfers on the Central Plain, possibly due to more holdings becoming available in the wake of the Black Death.

There is a close correlation between the number of fines issued and the period of the Great Famine, particularly the years 1315 and 1318. There is also a notable increase in the amount of woodland and moor transferred at this time and a correlation between some of the troubled areas mentioned in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* and parishes with high numbers of fines issued during the early fourteenth century. Overall, the evidence indicates that the traditionally well-settled districts of the county faced problems during the period of the "crisis" of the early fourteenth century. There is evidence of new settlement occurring in the more western districts and of an attempt to turn over more land to the plough in an attempt to grow more corn in the face of disastrous harvests.

In the fifteenth century there is evidence of a move towards more mixed farming in the county as the dominance of arable production waned, indeed, there are signs of this process beginning to occur in the fourteenth century. This had a less dramatic effect in the

western border districts which had an important pastoral economy from an early date but there was a dramatic change in the east of the county where percentages of pasture continued to rise throughout the fifteenth century. It also appears that the arable dominance of the Ross Region, apparent in the mid-nineteenth century, had its origins in the fourteenth century. The adjacent region of Archenfield, despite having many similarities to the Ross Region, appears to have pursued a different course of evolution, in terms of land use, until the fifteenth century. It seems likely that its cultural links with Wales remained quite strong throughout much of the period, influencing the type of farming people favoured and the methods of land transfer that they used.

Shropshire

Feet of fines have allowed the creation of a greatly increased dataset of place-names and personal names for Shropshire. This data has enabled wide-ranging study of medieval land-use and settlement. Analysis has indicated that Shropshire had a more mixed agricultural economy than neighbouring Herefordshire and from an earlier date. This appears to be due to the complex physical make-up of the county which supported a variety of distinct regions. Arable was the dominant land type recorded in the fines for Shropshire but it appears to have been less important to the economy than in Herefordshire. There is evidence to suggest that there was more arable available during the period of "crisis" in the early fourteenth century than in Herefordshire. This may account for the less obvious increase in woodland conveyances in this period in Shropshire. People in Herefordshire may have been forced into woodland clearances during the "crisis" to establish more arable, whereas in Shropshire there may have been

more of an arable surplus. It seems likely that the famine did not affect Shropshire in quite the same ways as in other counties. There is plentiful evidence of problems occurring in Shropshire in the early fourteenth century but the upheavals may have had a less dramatic effect on long-term patterns of land use. There is an interesting correlation between the parishes, where there is evidence of the greatest amount of activity in fines, and those parishes recorded as facing problems in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones*.

The Clee-Wenlock district was the most important agricultural region throughout the period, although it experienced fragmentation towards the end of the fifteenth century. There was also a fall in the importance of arable as other land types began to achieve much more significant status. The relatively low numbers of fines issued concerned with people of Welsh descent seems to support the suggestion that, like in Herefordshire, there was a community continuing to live and work using Welsh customs, within Shropshire.

In general terms activity seems to have been concentrated south of the River Severn. In the early thirteenth century, much of the evidence is from the central and eastern parts of the county although evidence of new settlement in the west becomes apparent from the mid-thirteenth century onwards. There are many more records of woodland transfers in Shropshire than in Herefordshire. The highest percentages are recorded in the South West Upland region. Transfers of woodland occurred there well beyond the thirteenth century and it is possible that new settlement occurred as a result of a rise in population in the adjacent Clee-Wenlock district and, perhaps, because of population pressures in other counties in the early fourteenth century.

It seems likely that some of the changes apparent in Herefordshire in the early fourteenth century started to affect Shropshire later in the century with a dramatic fall in activity in the traditionally well-settled Clee-Wenlock region (a situation noticeable on Herefordshire's Central Plain in the first half of the fourteenth century). It is possible that this area suffered the most from the famines and plagues of this era and did not begin to recover its status until the early fifteenth century when it emerged as the most dominant region, in terms of overall activity, once again. It appears that this district retained its status as the primary arable region in the county throughout the medieval period, with areas such as Corve Dale resisting the change towards more mixed farming until well into the seventeenth century. This may account for the less dramatic changes apparent in Shropshire in the later Middle Ages; most of the other regions were either committed to mixed farming already or had embraced the new changes by the fifteenth century. Indeed, some of the early fines for Shropshire provide evidence of the importance of pastoralism in the county, particularly sheep husbandry. The relatively low percentages of transfers of meadow and pasture in the county corresponds with evidence from other sources which suggest that meadow, in particular, was a very rare commodity. Most of the evidence for transfers of these types occurs in the north of the county and on the Weald Moors. By the later Middle Ages these districts had emerged as significant dairy farming areas.

Gloucestershire

The large numbers of fines for Gloucestershire have enabled the production of an extensive, countywide, survey. The study has greatly increased the dataset of medieval personal and place-names for the county and analysis of the various types of land and

property conveyed has led to some important findings. Records of arable and meadow seem to have been fairly evenly spread throughout the whole county. There is a distinct bias in the Cotswolds towards pasture; this indicates that the Cotswolds had developed into the primary wool producing region of the county since the eleventh century. The Forest of Dean has reasonable records of all the major land types throughout the period. The exception is the centre of the region which was heavily wooded and had a distinct woodland economy throughout the medieval period and beyond.

Unlike the other counties, large numbers of fines were issued in the early thirteenth century which suggests that the circumstances which encouraged new settlement were more attractive in Gloucestershire at this time. The more clearly defined border status of the other counties may have hindered settlement prior to the Edwardian Conquest of Wales in the late thirteenth century. Gloucestershire, being nearer to Westminster than the other counties, may have had a population more ready to embrace a new method of conveyance than those in the other counties.

There is evidence of new settlement occurring in Gloucestershire in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. There are some interesting transfers of woodland at this time that appear to be linked to the assarting process and characterized by the involvement of the Berkeley family. There is an interesting rise in woodland transfers apparent in the Forest of Dean in the later fourteenth century which may indicate some new settlement there, possibly due to a relaxation of Forest Law and the rise in the importance of this region in terms of the production of its traditional industries. There is a major change in agricultural activity apparent in the evidence for Gloucestershire from the

early fourteenth century. Fines provide evidence of a massive growth in the market for arable land at this time and there is a correlation between the numbers of fines issued and the period of the Great Famine. It appears that the limits of cultivation may have been reached in the Vale by this time and as the century progressed there was a move towards more mixed farming there. On the Cotswolds sheep husbandry - always an important part of the economy of the region - began to become the dominant industry, particularly from the late fourteenth century, as the area capitalized on the increased demand for English wool and cloth, particularly from Flanders.

Fines indicate that Gloucestershire had a more important urban population than Shropshire and Herefordshire. This is mainly due to the importance of two key towns: Gloucester and Bristol. Gloucester maintained its dominance throughout the period with Bristol a close second. There were also a number of other towns with rising status in the period, such as Tewkesbury and Cirencester. The much greater numbers of fines issued in Gloucestershire than in the other counties suggest a higher population, a greater social mobility and a greater desire and impetus for new colonization.

7.4 Summary.

This study has indicated the potential of feet of fines as a source for the historian and the historical-geographer. The use of GIS technology has considerably aided the study and has enabled the analysis of over 5000 original documents to be undertaken in a relatively short period of time. The analysis has shown changing land use and settlement patterns in the chosen study areas and has enabled the production of digital maps which

highlight the findings on both a parish and a regional level. The research has established that fines are a reliable and, when used together with the technology now available to historians, an especially productive source for the study of the landscape in the Middle Ages.

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